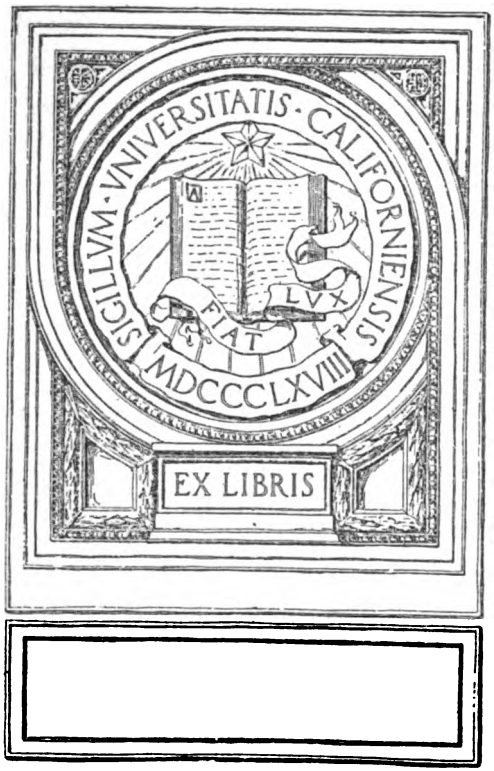
THE LAKE OF GENEVA

SIR FREDERICK TREVES



THE LAKE OF GENEVA

A FOUNTAIN IN NYON

The Lake of Geneva

By

SIR FREDERICK TREVES, BART.

G.C.V.O., C.B., LL.D., Sergeant-Surgeon to His Majesty the King

Author of "The Other Side of the Lantern," "The Cradle of the Deep," "The Country of the Ring and the Book," "High-ways and By-ways of Dorset," "The Riviera of the Corniche Road," etc. etc.

With a Map and 100 *Illustrations from Photographs by the Author*

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1922

Preface

APPARENTLY no book in English deals—from the point of view of the present-day traveller—with the Lake of Geneva as a whole. One work will concern itself with the Swiss side and another with the shores of Savoy, the two countries being regarded as unassimilable. Modern facilities in travelling have made the two shores one, and, moreover, the history of the district can hardly be appreciated unless it be considered as a whole.

I have included two places—Abondance and Gruyères—which are not on Lac Léman because few who come to the Lake fail to visit these ancient towns, since it is from the Lake that they are both most conveniently reached.

I am indebted to the management of the *Etablissement des Bains* at Evian for access to a library of over two hundred volumes dealing exclusively with the Lake and with Savoy. Extensive use has been made of the admirable *Dictionnaire Historique du Canton de Vaud*, the publication of which has just been completed.

FREDERICK TREVES.

VEVEY, *February*, 1922.

Contents

Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Illustrations

List of Illustrations

List of Illustrations

THE LAKE OF GENEVA

I

THE LAKE OF GENEVA

THE concise facts about the Lake of Geneva are these: It is the Lac Léman of the French. It is the largest of the lakes. It stands at a height of 1,220 feet above the level of the sea, and its waters are blue. It is bounded by Savoy on the one side and by Switzerland on the other. The Rhone runs through it from end to end. It is subject to a strange undulatory wave called a *seiche*, which passes across it like a shudder, or as if the side of the cup in which the Lake is lodged had been lightly struck.

The vast dimensions of the Lake can best be realized by imagining it empty of its water. It would then appear as a barren valley of rock 45 miles long and 8½ miles broad at its widest point. It would take the form of a vast, terrific canyon, with sides of clammy and cadaverous stone and with a depth so profound that its bottom would be almost in twilight, since at its deepest it sinks no less than 1,095 feet.

At one end of the valley the Rhone would pour in as an icy waterfall; while at the other end—like a card-

board toy on the top of a bank—would be the city of Geneva. The bottom of the valley would be covered with the clay-coloured mud brought down by the river, and here, one may imagine, would be writhing and plunging those fearsome reptiles that belong to the Legends of the Lake. There would be strange heaps of wreckage amid the silvery acres of dead fish, and, perhaps, on a ledge of rock in the valley's side a lonely skeleton with a rope and stone still dangling from its neck; for executions by drowning were once common in these waters.

Far more important than its topographical features are the conflicts of thought and of national ideals of which the Lake has been the scene. On the south shores of Léman the feudal form of government prevailed. Here the castle and the baron dominated the land; the peasants were serfs, and those in higher place but obsequious servants. In early days Savoy was broken up into little *seigneuries*, which held their own with such strength as they could command. Then came Humbert of the White Hands, who banded the independent, feudal lords into one united body and so established the State of Savoy, of which he—as Count—became the autocratic ruler. Savoy rose to be a power, not through the merit of its princes, but by the circumstance that France never ceased in her attempts to gain possession of it. It was the greed and aggression of France that made Savoy whole, that kept it united and kept it strong. But whether under one lord or under many, it remained the land where men had few rights but those of obedience.

On the other side of the Lake the contrary condition

held sway. The people were bent upon acquiring liberty and the control of their own destinies. So long as they were subject to rule they never ceased to clamour for more freedom. Little by little their demands were granted until, with increasing confidence, they grew bold, threw off the yoke of their overlords and established the first republics in modern Europe. Thus on one side of the water was an enlightened democracy, while on the other was a dull feudalism.

The waters of the Lake that divided the Royalist from the Republican were destined, in time, to separate two antagonistic phases of religious thought. When the Reformation blazed forth, the north shores of Lac Léman became the advanced line of Protestantism and the bulwark behind which its forces gathered. Across the water were the entrenchments of Rome. These upholders of adverse faiths glared at one another across the blue until, in a memorable year, the army of the Reformation crossed the barrier, invaded the Roman lines, swept over Chablais[1] and converted it to Protestantism. The victory was only for a while, since under the leadership of St. Francis of Sales the Catholic Church succeeded in regaining the ground that it had lost and that it has never since surrendered.

But this is not all, for the Lake was to witness another profound movement which served further to divide the minds of men—Voltairism came into being. Voltairism, Lord Morley claims to stand out as "one of the great decisive movements in the European advance, like the Revival of Learning, or the Reformation." "We may think," he adds, "of Voltairism in France

[1] Chablais is that province of Savoy which borders on the Lake.

somewhat as we think of Catholicism or the Renaissance or Calvinism. It was one of the cardinal liberations of the growing race, one of the emphatic manifestations of some portion of the minds of men, which an immediately foregoing system and creed had either ignored or outraged."[1] Voltaire lived at Ferney—a few miles from Geneva—for some twenty years, during which time he never failed to spread abroad the views with which his name is associated.

In present aspect the two shores of Lac Léman differ very much when seen from the water. On the Savoy side is a luxuriant land, wayward and unsophisticated, a land without walls or hedges where things seem to grow as they will with little method or restraint. The north shore, on the other hand, is meticulously tilled. Its slope, from Vevey almost to Nyon, is covered with vineyards patterned out by formal lines and made to look stiff and artificial. In the spring the northern bank of the Lake for many miles is a cinnamon-brown and as monotonous in hue as a ploughed field. When the vine leaves appear the slope becomes a hesitating green and then a bolder green which, as the autumn wanes, fades into tints of yellow or ruddy brown. Thus it is that the more pleasing view of the Lake is gained from the northern side, for it affords a view across the water of a coast that is always green and that has, moreover, as a glorious background, a range of mountains capped with snow.

Many times and by many pens has the Lake been described. The descriptions are monotonous, for they are all in terms of "blue" and are indeed little more

[1] "Voltaire," by John Morley. London, 1897.

than rhapsodies in blue. Ruskin exults in the glories of this tint with such thoroughness that he leaves the subject almost exhausted, for he speaks of "the ever-answering glow of unearthly aquamarine, ultramarine, violet-blue, gentian-blue, peacock-blue, river-of-paradise-blue, glass of a painted window melted in the sun."

It is unquestionable that the Lake is often blue; but it is always a delicate and timid blue, very unlike the bold assertive blue of the Mediterranean. It is, moreover, a tint that ever varies, that changes with each hour of the day, for the surface of the Lake is sensitive, sympathetic and full of moods. It may fade into grey, the grey of the pearl if the sun be on it, the grey of the smoke of burning wood if it be in the shadow of a cloud. There are days when it is almost jade-green. There are evenings when it is streaked with lilac, with coral-pink or with rose-red. There are, moreover, occasions, it must be said, when "the river-of-paradise-blue" is replaced by a colour so commonplace as that of an old pewter plate. The surface of the Lake has been compared to a mirror, but it is seldom so hard or so artificial as to justify that comparison. It may on a sunless day resemble a sheet of blue Damascus steel, or when the mist is gathering it may have the appearance of sullen ice, but of the Lake as a sitting-room mirror few can have knowledge.

For convenience of description the Lake in the following account is divided into four sections:

A. From Geneva to the Dranse.
B. From the Dranse to the Rhone.
C. From the Rhone to Lausanne.
D. From Lausanne to Geneva.

II

GENEVA: A GENERAL VIEW

GENEVA, when seen for the first time, should be seen from the Lake. To arrive at the railway station and be conveyed through featureless streets in an hotel omnibus is merely to gain an impression of a town that may be any town, may be Lyons or Marseilles or such other city as has the names of its streets inscribed in French.

The visitor would expect to find something very distinctive about Geneva, if he be one of those who hold that human characteristics are influenced or determined by environment. He would insist that there must be something unusual about the aspect, position or surroundings of Geneva to account for its history and its pronounced individuality. What is there in the topography of the place that can explain its ponderous gravity, its love of learning, its hatred of the trivial, its passion for reform, and its general dourness?

Geneva seems never to have had a childhood, much less a frivolous youth. It has always appeared to be old and solemn beyond its years. From its earliest days it clamoured for liberty at the time when its neighbours were quite content with their dukes and their kings. While other towns had their tournaments and courts of love, Geneva was poring over its books. While the girl of Savoy was slyly dropping rose leaves on a trouba-

GENEVA FROM THE LAKE

dour, the maiden of Geneva was sitting at the feet of a droning preacher. While its gates were closed to the jester and the mountebank, they were open to the fanatic and the crank; for Geneva was ever a sanctuary to the man with a grievance, to the honest rebel and to all who were oppressed. There has passed along the streets of this city as strange a company of men as ever haunted the shades of Dante's Purgatorio, wild-eyed men who went by shaking their fists at a world of wrong, men too who were aflame with the spirit of destruction and the breaking up of laws, as well as smiling men who, as they passed, muttered to themselves of a new heaven and a new earth.

What mark has all this emotion left upon Geneva, or what is there about the disposition of the town that can explain its exceptional temperament? The answer is: There is nothing.

Approached from the Lake, Geneva appears as a brilliant city at the end of an avenue of shining water bounded by green banks. Here the Lake terminates and here the city shuts in the scene, as if the sheet of water were a stage. The houses are drawn across from shore to shore like a dam. They form an unbroken wall and yet at some point the Rhone must be breaking through to make its escape to the sea; but of any such gap there is no sign. About the place is a sense of finality, a sense of having come to the end of things, for over the tops of the houses that close the Lake there is nothing to be seen but the sky. The dam might be built on the brink of the world and beyond it there may be nothing but space into which the Rhone drops like a waterfall.

On nearer approach the brilliancy of Geneva becomes more evident. The houses are lofty and bravely coloured and present a wide front of thousands of windows and thousands of sun-blinds. There is nothing to suggest academic solemnity or puritanical gloom. On a hillock to the left are the towers and spire of a church, but beyond this Geneva would appear to be composed of gay and magnificent hotels. In the matter of cheerfulness and worldliness it may be an inland Nice or a lake-side Monte Carlo.

A fuller acquaintance with Calvin's home shows it to be a fine ambitious city, beautifully ordered and modern in every particle of its being. Geneva, like Lausanne, has long carried on a crusade against all that is old within its boundaries. Old Geneva has practically vanished, except in a few by-ways and corners; while in its place is a reformed city which is evidently determined never to put new wine into old bottles.

That Geneva is still a place of refuge may be gathered from the fact that, although the population of the Canton is 151,000, only 50,000 of this number are Genevese, while 39,000 are Swiss of other Cantons and no fewer than 62,000 are foreigners.

The passing away of old Geneva is to be deplored, as it was a town of peculiar fascination. Ruskin speaks of it as "the most lovely spot, and the most notable, without any possible doubt, of the European universe," as "a bird's nest of a place, the centre of religious and social thought and of physical beauty to all living Europe."[1] Happily very many prints and old accounts exist of Geneva as it was, so that it is possible to

[1] "Præterita."

reconstruct, in imagination, the city of ancient days.[1] It consisted of two parts joined by a bridge over the Rhone. The part on the north side—the Quartier St. Gervais—was small and occupied a very low hillock; while the south part—the Quartier St. Pierre—was large and covered a dome-shaped hill of some height. Both parts of the town were surrounded by a wall and a moat. The wall was made formidable by many towers and pierced by many gates. Of the moat, the gates and the towers all traces have disappeared, but of the ancient walls there are still some meagre relics to be seen, as in the Rue d'Italie and the Rue de Beauregard.

Mediæval Geneva was a small place. The confines of the south town may be indicated at the present day by the lake-side, the Rue d'Italie, the Rue des Casemates, the foot of the Rue de la Croix Rouge and the Corraterie; and the boundaries of the smaller town by the quay, by the Rue des Terreaux du Temple, the Cornavin and the Rue de Chantepoulet.

Inside the Quartier St. Pierre there are feeble traces of even an older town, the almost forgotten Burgundian town, for after the passing away of the Romans Geneva became, in 448, the capital of the Kingdom of Burgundy. Gondebaud, the most famous and most disreputable of the early Burgundian kings, built a castle in Geneva in the Bourg-de-Four and surrounded the town with a wall. About 534 the Franks possessed the place, but at the end of the ninth century it was annexed by the new

[1] "Voyage pittoresque en Suisse," par Émile Begin. Paris, 1852. "Switzerland," by Wm. Beattie. London, 1834. "Les Actes et Gestes Merveilleux de la Cité de Genève," par A. Fromment (written in 1550). Geneva, 1854. "Le Tour du Léman," par A. de Bougy. Paris, 1846. "Beautés de l'Histoire de la Savoie et de Genève," par P. Nougaret. Paris, 1818. "L'Ancienne Genève," par J. Mayor. Geneva, 1896.

Burgundian kingdom under Rodolfe I. In 1038—on the death of Rodolfe III—it passed into the possession of the German Empire, and thus is explained how the Imperial eagle on a yellow ground became a part of the arms of the city. The wall that enclosed the old Burgundian town ran to the east of the Cathedral and the Bourg-de-Four, followed on the north the line of the Rue Calvin, and extended towards the Rhone as far as the Tour de Boël. Fragments of this old wall appear in the Rue du Manège, Rue de Bémont, the alleys of the Rue de la Pélisserie and the north face of the Rue Calvin.

The bridge was a remarkable feature of Geneva. It was interrupted by an island, as it is to this day. It was of wood, and was crowded with wooden houses which hung perilously over the Rhone. They did more than this. They waded out into the river on piles, some venturing as far as a hundred feet. They formed a curious medley of taverns and private houses, of shops and primitive factories, for in certain of the dwellings there was a water-wheel whirling under the ground floor. The houses were all gaily decorated, and the roadway was made brilliant by swinging shop-signs and the sign-boards of inns, with perhaps, now and then, the coat of arms of a noble resident. As the structure was of wood, it is no wonder that, on a certain day in 1670, the bridge and all that was on it was burned to the water's edge.

About a century ago Geneva was the delight of everyone who had eyes to see. There was no city like it, old travellers were wont to assert. Shelley was about the only visitor of note who could find "nothing in it that can repay you the trouble of walking over its rough

GENEVA: THE LAST OF THE PENTHOUSES

stones."[1] He complained, too, that the gates were closed at 10 P.M. (The chief gates were demolished in 1881.) To Ruskin it was always "the dear old decrepit town." He describes it, in his "Præterita," as "a little town, composed of a cluster of watermills, a street of penthouses, two wooden bridges, two dozen of stone houses on a little hill, and three or four perpendicular lanes up and down the hill." He found, however, another bridge over the moat. It was "the delicatest of filiform suspension bridges," he says, "strong enough it looked to carry a couple of lovers over in safety, or a nursemaid and children, but nothing heavier."

Old prints and drawings (such as those of Henri Silvestre) show what an exceedingly picturesque place it was, with its untidy river banks, its piratical-looking lanes, its tumbledown mills, its ancient dwellings with their great overshadowing roofs and wooden balconies, while the river-side houses hung over the water like a line of old clothes clinging to pegs.

Perhaps the most striking and unique feature of Geneva in those days were the penthouses. They stood high up under the eaves of the dwelling, where they formed part of the fifth story. They were supported on immensely tall square pillars of wood which sprang from the street. They sheltered the houses from sun and rain. There is only one penthouse left in Geneva. It is in the Rue de la Cité (No. 5). It consists of one towering square pillar which supports a room on the fifth story. The little room, which has two windows, looks like a dovecote on a pole. I can imagine it occupied by a boy who had faith in the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

[1] "History of a Six Weeks' Tour." London, 1817.

Those who are unmoved by new municipal buildings, palatial hotels and super-modern shops will find the most interesting part of Geneva in the Musée d'Art et Histoire, where will be seen, among a superb collection of old prints, two large models of the town as it appeared in 1815 and 1850 respectively. In the same museum also are deposited innumerable relics which have come down from the days of the lake-dweller and the Roman occupation to the sober times of the nineteenth century. Here will be seen a prehistoric boat and its paddles, old furniture, old ceilings, old tavern signs, old ironwork, as well as a medley of little things that recall the intimate life of the serious city. Notable in the collection are two street doors, one a splendid piece of woodwork of the sixteenth century from the Rue de la Pélisserie, and another from the Rue Calvin which is covered with the burnt-in stamps of various revolutionary clubs. Among these writings in red-hot iron are a heart enclosing the word "constant," the cap of liberty on a staff with the doubtfully sincere word "pax," the frequently recurring design of two fish, and many monograms and initials.

One feature in Geneva that curiously impresses the visitor is the sight of the Rhone rushing through the town. There is some inscrutable magic in this spectacle, for I have watched a perspiring tourist tearing along the quay with guide-book in hand and with evidently not a moment to spare. I have seen him cast a glance over the parapet at the Rhone and suddenly stop, to forget his haste, and possibly his lunch, and to gaze on the river with the absorption of a mesmerized man. It is difficult to say what constitutes the fascination of this

amazing stream. It is an effect compounded of many things, of the terrific speed at which the tide whirls by, of its haunting colour—a spectral blue—and of its gigantic volume, for it seems as if this outrush must empty the Lake in a day.

The sight of the Rhone at Geneva made a great impression upon Ruskin, who explains its enchantment in the following fine passage:

"For all other rivers there is a surface, and an underneath, and a vaguely displeasing idea of the bottom. But the Rhone flows like one lambent jewel; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent rush and translucent strength of it blue to the shore, and radiant to the depth. Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing, but flying water; not water, neither,—melted glacier, rather, one should call it; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of Time. Waves of clear sea are, indeed, lovely to watch, but they are always coming or gone, never in any taken shape to be seen for a second. But here was one mighty wave that was always itself, and every fluted swirl of it, constant as the wreathing of a shell . . . the never-pausing plunge, and never-fading flash, and never-hushing whisper."

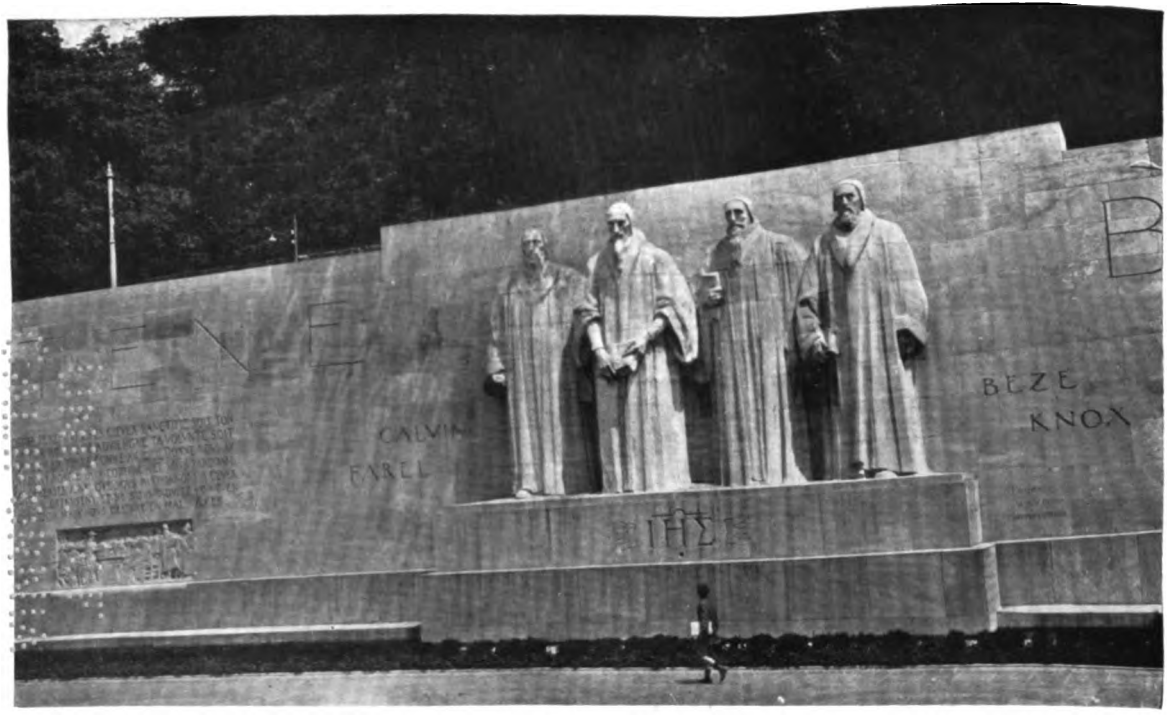
In the place of the two bridges of Ruskin's time there are now seven. They are all temperately ugly. In the middle of the river, as it leaves the Lake, is a pleasant little island called, in old days, the Ile des Bergues, or Isle of Barges. It is shaded by trees and forms a cool retreat from the whirl of traffic and the buzz of life along the quays. It is occupied by an unpretentious café and a pretentious statue of Rousseau, by reason of which it is called Rousseau's Island. It brings those who come here in very intimate association with the wonder of the

river; since, but for the lack of movement, it might be a raft anchored in the torrent.

It is, moreover, a place frequented by sea-gulls. These birds are an agreeable feature in the life of the Lake. Their migration every year is a matter of mystery. They go; but no one knows whither, for the nursery of the race is still a secret place. The birds are becoming demoralized. Their proper occupation is fishing; but now that the tourists have taken to feeding them with bread they have neglected that industry. Instead of following the fish in the Lake, they prefer to follow the steamers, to haunt the quays and to subsist on the unemployment dole which is so lavishly bestowed. They will soon become, like the pigeons of Venice, a company of tourist-supported idlers.

If the average visitor were advised that there is, in a public park in Geneva, a new and recently erected monument to the Reformation he would probably express gratitude for the warning and add that there were already enough recent memorials in England and France to satisfy the most morbid craving. Yet this is a monument so remarkable and so impressive that it is worth a pilgrimage to see it.

It consists of a long stone wall of great height. At the bottom of the wall runs a stream, clear as crystal, in a channel of stone. There are lilies in flower in the stream. Above the wall rises the old city of Geneva. In the centre of the wall stand erect four gigantic figures of men. They are the four leaders of the Reformation—Farel, Calvin, Beze and Knox. They are solemn enough and grim enough; while their immense proportions give them the aspect of superhuman strength.



GENEVA: MONUMENT TO THE REFORMATION

They stand, side by side, with their backs to the wall. It is, however, no mere wall; for behind it is the curtain of the ancient bulwarks, that wall of 1548 which kept safe the town. It is the wall that faces Rome.

Along the vast screen are other figures, smaller and, by comparison, less significant. Among them are Cromwell, the courtly Coligny and plain, honest Robert Williams. There are also bas-reliefs depicting various scenes in the development of the Reformation between the years 1536 and 1602. All these are of interest, but they do not disturb the impression made by the four stern-faced men who stand with their backs to the wall that faces Rome.

III

GENEVA: THE OLD STREETS

THE heart of Geneva is L'Ile, a little island on the Rhone, where the old bridge crossed between the two *quartiers* of the town. There was a bridge here before the days of Christ, for Julius Cæsar found it stemming the river when he came to this part in B.C. 58. On the south of the Rhone at that date were vague people called the Allobroges, and on the north the equally vague Helvetes. Cæsar had already dealt with the Allobroges, but the Helvetes were giving trouble, were apt to swarm over the bridge and were indeed making themselves exceedingly offensive; so the Roman general caused the bridge to be broken down and thus stopped their activities. This transaction is recorded on a stone in the wall of the modern tower which now stands on the island. This tower, which is pleasing enough for a structure that has no reason for being a tower, occupies the site of a very old castle or keep which came to be, at one time, the Bastille of Geneva. Here was confined the heroic patriot Berthelier, and at the foot of the tower he was beheaded. This was in 1519, as a very theatrical statue calls to mind.

The bridge opens upon the Place Bel Air, which was at one time known as the Square of the Three Kings from a tavern of that name. Professor Doumergue

states that in this spot the punishment of the pillory was administered as late as 1811.[1]

The Low Town is represented by a series of parallel streets which run east and west in a line with the quay. These streets were once the most picturesque in Geneva, for here were the penthouses. They have now been entirely rebuilt and are devoted to rows of ambitious shops. Even the quaint old alleys which, only a few years ago, crept between the Rue du Marché or Rue de la Croix d'Or and the Rue du Rhône have vanished or have been robbed of any interest.

The Fusterie, the Molard and the Place de Longemalle—now busy squares—were once inlets from the Lake where ships discharged their cargoes. At the Lake end of the Molard was a tower which (very much renovated) still remains. From the iron rod on the summit of its roof dangles a small key, a quite ordinary front door or cupboard key. This is still the subject of some surmise. Professor Doumergue thus comments on it: "The key may be that of the Rive Gate sent to the Duke of Savoy in 1602, concealed in a turkey, by a traitor."[2] A key, it might be added, forms a part of the arms of Geneva, but it is a large key, appropriate to a castle keep, and not to a china closet.

The High Town is reached by steep streets which all inevitably lead to the Town Hall, the Cathedral and the Bourg-de-Four. Of these streets the Rue de la Cité has probably seen more of the past life of Geneva than has any other. At the bottom of the street is the fountain of the Escalade, erected in 1857. It is a pleasant-look-

[1] "Geneva Past and Present." Geneva. (No date. A most excellent guide-book, marred only by the lack of an index.)

[2] *Op. cit.*, page 21.

ing monument of stone, alive with little bronze figures which are very busy in making vivid the tale they have to tell. It is placed where it is because on the night of December 11, 1602, when the attempt to seize the city was made, this small street was in the very thick of it.

Near the fountain is the sole remaining penthouse in Geneva, of which mention has been already made (page 11). In the alley No. 18 is a fine example of the old balconied house. The building has four stories above the ground floor. Each of these is provided with a deep and spacious wooden balcony with well-turned railings. The four balconies are one above the other and represent the entries to as many different residences. In another alley (No. 19) is a good specimen of the tall staircase tower which is so common in old Genevese dwellings. In the Place du Grand Mézel, higher up the street, Bonivard lived after his release from the prison of Chillon. It is now a little *Place* of superior private houses.

Near the top of the hill the Rue de la Cité changes its name to the Grande Rue. No. 40 in this street was the birthplace—as a tablet declares—of Jean Jacques Rousseau (June 28, 1712). The ancient house is replaced by a quite new building, belonging, appropriately enough, to a company of printers. About this point the Rue de la Pélisserie stumbles up into the Grande Rue. It is a narrow, dingy street of poor but picturesque houses, many of which are of some age. It is so steep a street that at the bottom it has recourse to a flight of steps in order to accomplish the ascent. At No. 11 is a doleful alley. It ends in a court that is mysterious and mean

GENEVA : RUE CALVIN

and suggestive of a trap. Here the visitor is brought suddenly face to face with a mass of mouldy masonry. This is a part of the old Burgundian wall very dramatically presenting itself. Near the top of the Rue de la Pélisserie is a large private house (No. 18). It is the best house in the street, possesses four stories, has a quite dignified entrance and the aspect of being well-to-do. It is not old, nor has it a claim to any architectural beauty, but it was here that George Eliot stayed from October, 1849, to March, 1850. She lodged with a family named Durade, the husband being an artist. She had a bed-sitting-room, took her meals with the Durades and paid for this lodging and board 150 francs a month, including light. She was the only lodger. She hired a piano. Lunch was at 12.30, dinner at 4 and tea at 8.[1]

Turning out of this street is the Rue Calvin, a sober, narrow street which is making its way to the Cathedral. It ends in a tiny square where are a fountain and a tree and where people come to rest; for it is as quiet as a convent courtyard. In a house (No. 11), near to this little square, Calvin lived. It is needless to say that the house has been pulled down.[2] It is represented now by a glaring new building which announces itself as the office of the Board of Health and offers to test milk and other articles of consumption as well as to inspect weights and measures. It is remarkable that no memorial of Calvin exists, if exception be made of the questionable chair in the Cathedral—"not a room, not a piece of furniture," writes Doumergue, "not even a gravestone."

[1] "George Eliot's Life," by J. W. Cross, London, 1885.

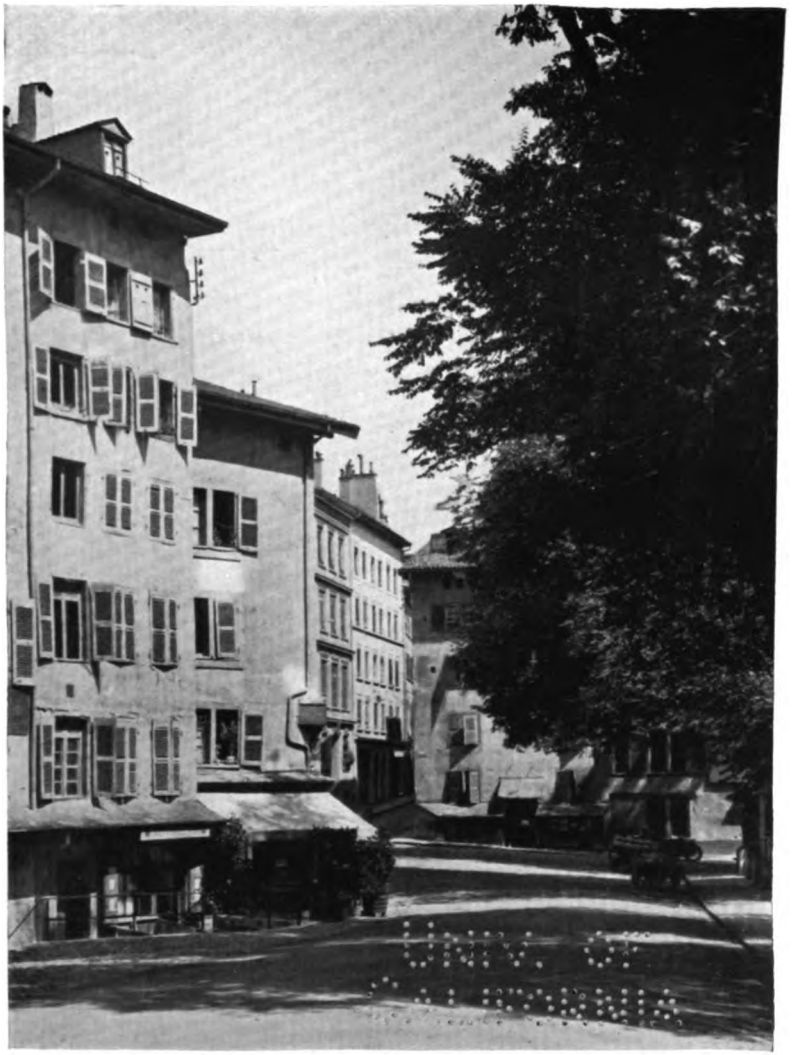
[2] It was demolished in 1706.

In the Rue du Puits St. Pierre, leading out of the Rue Calvin, is the famous Tavel house (No. 6). This is one of the most perfect of the old city houses. It is a square, solid building, supported at one corner by a round tower with a conical roof. The windows have been modernized, although their original outlines are still evident; but there is one little slit of a window with a pointed arch which seems to have been overlooked. There is a series of very curious heads projecting from the wall of the house, which has besides a fine courtyard with a winding stair and some admirable ironwork in the forms of a fanlight and a balcony.

Before the Rue de la Cité finally reaches the Bourg-de-Four it changes its name for the second time and becomes the Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville. In this street (No. 8) is the Turrettini house, which claims, with the Tavel house, to be one of the few remaining specimens of the great houses of Geneva. It dates from 1620. The Turrettini were Italians who came to Geneva as Protestant refugees and who, in their new home, raised themselves to positions of dignity and repute. The house is built of stone in the classical style and is impressive by its fine proportions and its great simplicity.

Two other streets of interest clamber up from the Low Town to that common meeting-place, the Bourg-de-Four. They are the Rue Verdaine and the Rue de la Fontaine. At No. 15 Rue Verdaine, Henri Amiel passed the closing days of his life. He was that strange, lonely and melancholy man who poured forth the dreariness of his soul in the *Journal Intime*.[1] It is a morbid, egotistical and unwholesome work which would have

[1] "Amiel's Journal." Translated by Mrs. Humphry Ward. London, 1889.



GENEVA : BOURG DE FOUR

been better left where it was found—locked up in a box. The house, which has not the merit of age, is now a warehouse. It looks towards the Cathedral (which stands above it) and faces that remarkable passage, the Degrés de Poule or Hen Steps. The Hen Steps are entered through a rounded archway and mount up to the Cathedral. The steps, which form a stair as steep as a ladder, pass underneath some ancient buildings which were formerly stables and granaries. The Hen Steps date from 1554.

At No. 32 Rue de la Fontaine is an old entry with a rounded arch that leads into an alley. The arch pierces the fragment of a wall as ancient as the doorway. The guide-book states that this wall belonged to the palace of the Bishop and that by this exit Pierre de la Baume, the last Bishop of Geneva, quitted the city on July 14, 1533.

The Bourg-de-Four is an irregularly shaped place on the summit of the town, surrounded by equally irregularly shaped houses. It has a modest fountain, is shaded by some old trees and is altogether an agreeable and picturesque part of the city. Here stood the ancient Burgundian castle which was destroyed by the Count of Savoy in 1320. The Bourg was for centuries the social and business centre of Geneva, and a very pleasant rallying point it must have been. It was the place where the fairs were held and where the chief inns were located. There are still some of the old inscriptions remaining, such as the Pomme d'Or 1734, and some old signs, such as that of the Sea Shell and the Black Horse. From the last-named it would appear that it offered "bon logis" as long ago as 1563.

IV

GENEVA: THE OLD BUILDINGS AND THE ALLEYS

THE Town Hall, near to the Bourg-de-Four, possesses considerable interest. Its history is very fully recorded in Professor Doumergue's work. Externally the building offers little attraction. It looks comparatively modern and presents the features of the municipal offices of any large provincial town. It has, however, an entry—built in 1617—of greater dignity than the average municipal office attains; while all along its front is a stone bench fit for Roman senators to sit on. In the wall to the left of the main entrance is a bronze tablet set up in 1892 to record a certain political achievement. It is in itself of no moment, but it replaced a tablet erected in 1558 in honour of the Reformation. This bronze is now in the north aisle of the Cathedral. In front of the tablet stood the pillory, and here too was a raised seat from which, as late as 1829, criminal sentences were read out.

On a certain day in June, 1762, the road at the foot of the tablet was the scene of a curious ceremony. A fairly brisk fire of faggots was burning in the street, and around it, but at a careful distance, was a crowd of people whose expressions denoted varying shades of indignation or disgust. In the centre of the circle was a man in a dismal costume who was busy tearing up books and throwing them on the fire. The man was the

common hangman and the books were the works of J. J. Rousseau.

At the back of the Town Hall is the Baudet Tower, one of the oldest buildings in the city, for it dates from 1455. It is a small, low, square tower of great charm and obviously of great age. The authorities of Geneva have done their best to make it look new, but only with indifferent success. Even the upper story, which was transformed in 1894, fails to spoil it.

In the corner of the picturesque court of the Town Hall is a fine Renaissance doorway bearing the date 1556. It opens upon the famous paved slope. This slope, which is unique in Europe, makes its way by a series of sharp turns to the top of the building—to the third floor, in fact. It has a vaulted roof, is paved with small cobblestones and is lit through a series of arches which open upon the courtyard. In order to realize this remarkable stairless stair one should imagine the syndic and his wife returning late in the evening from a ride in the country. They reach the Town Hall and, without dismounting, ride up side by side to the very door of their bedroom, where they alight from their horses.

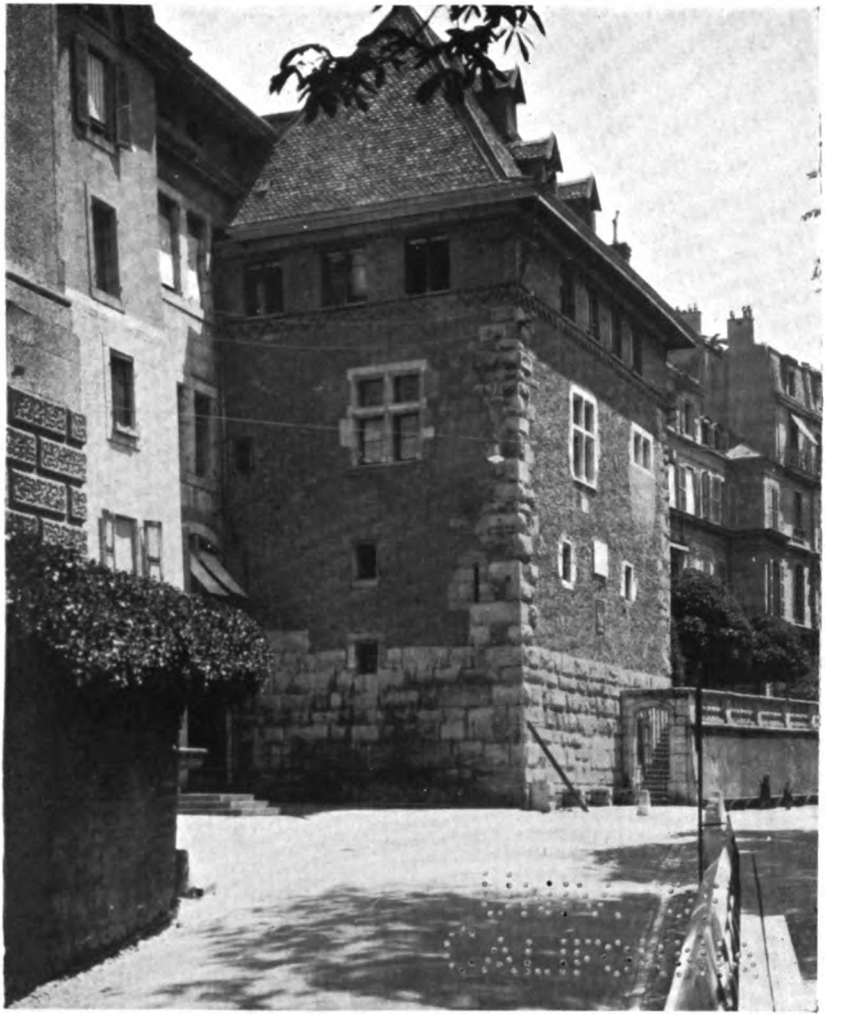
The one gracious room in the Town Hall is the State Council Chamber, which dates from the 15th century. It is small and in spite of its modern windows realizes very fitly the solemn room where Calvin imposed his will and pronounced before the awed council his edicts. The ceiling is a reproduction of that of the 16th century, while the panelling has been removed to the Museum and replaced by a commendable imitation. Round the walls are certain frescoes which were only laid bare during alterations made in 1901. They deal with Justice

and depict the perfect judge as a gentleman with his hands cut off to show that he cannot—even if he would—accept a bribe. In this room also are syndics' staffs dating as far back as 1450.

The Grand Council Chamber is comparatively modern, while the very ornate Alabama Hall is only of interest from the facts that the Red Cross Society was founded here in 1864 and that within its walls in 1872 the *Alabama* claim was settled.

Opposite the Hôtel de Ville is the old market hall of 1415. It has been many times restored but is still, with its gaudily painted shutters, an impressive building. The open ground floor where the market was held is now void, while the upper part of the hall is (or was) the city armoury.

Behind the Town Hall is the famous Promenade of La Treille. It is the oldest public walk in the city and, being placed on the ramparts, provides a magnificent view of the country to the south of Geneva. It is here that that poor solitary creature Amiel, the unsuccessful professor, was wont to pace to and fro pondering over the misery of life and inventing fresh expressions of melancholy for insertion in his diary. La Treille takes its origin from the early part of the 16th century. It has been frequently repaired and remade, as the dates (1557 to 1718) on the supporting wall serve to show. It is planted in all its length with chestnut trees, which make it the most pleasant and best shaded walk in Geneva. Not the least noticeable feature of the terrace is the bench which runs from one end of the parade to the other, for it claims the curious distinction of being the longest bench in the world.



GENEVA : TOUR BAUDET

Geneva: The Old Buildings

The Cathedral of St. Peter on the summit of the town is probably as well known to European travellers as St. Peter's at Rome or St. Paul's in London. Its two square towers and its graceful steeple form the landmarks of Geneva for miles around. The first church upon this site is credited with the date 1034. The present building had its origin in the 12th and 13th centuries and provides an illustration of the transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic styles. The very beautiful Gothic chapel of the Maccabees was constructed in 1406 and refashioned in 1878. The whole Cathedral has been much restored and affords an instance of the remarkable power the Genevese possess of making the most ancient building look new. The Corinthian portico which would do credit to a provincial corn exchange was added in 1759 to the permanent disfigurement of an otherwise consistent building. In the Cathedral is a plain chair "which it is *supposed* that Calvin employed in his pulpit."

There are two other old churches in this part of Geneva—the Madeleine and St. Germain. The Madeleine, in the queer ill-shapen *Place* of that name, dates from the early part of the 12th century; but was rebuilt in 1446 and in 1611 and very violently restored in recent years. Its gallant old tower (plastered over to make it appear new) has very ancient round-arched windows. The rest of the building is Gothic and is so "done up" that it may have been built in the present century. The church of St. Germain is almost as old as the Madeleine. It is much hemmed in by mean buildings. Its one fine feature is its venerable square tower which has happily escaped the restorer. The rest of the edifice has, however,

suffered severely at his hands. It is a church with a "past," for it has been in turn a butcher's shop, a Flemish chapel and an artillery barracks.

Close to the Cathedral is the Auditoire. It has been a church since 1218, except for an interval in the 16th century when it was a smithy. It was at one time a chapel for the English residents in Geneva. In the Auditoire Calvin delivered his famous lectures. On the wall is a tablet which states that John Knox, "pastor of the English residents and citizen of Geneva," preached in the chapel during the years 1555-7. The building, however, is so entirely modern in appearance that the announcement makes no impression, for it is impossible to associate this very present-day building with the 16th century and the great Scots reformer.

The St. Gervais quarter of Geneva, to the north of the Rhone, presents little that is of interest. The old *quartier*, surrounded by its walls and towers, occupied a very gentle slope, the summit of which is represented by the top of the Rue Cornavin. Here stood—at the end of a bridge crossing the moat—one of the main gates of Geneva. It was by this gate that most travellers entered the town, and as the railway station is situated here it happens that they still enter by the same point. As the southern town has its church of St. Peter's, so this division of Geneva has its church of St. Gervais.

This church dates from the middle of the 15th century. It has a fine tower with Romanesque windows. On the south face of the tower are the arms of the bishop, François de Mies, and the date 1485. The rest of the church adopts the Gothic arch, is built largely of brick, and presents, under the margin of the roof, a

cornice of *modillons* of the 15th century. The whole building has, however, been so thoroughly restored as to be of small interest and, being a Protestant church, is kept locked. On the outer wall of the church is a tablet giving the names of those citizens of Geneva—seventeen in all—who were killed during the Escalade of 1602.

The Rue du Temple, by the side of the church, contains many old houses of the humbler type. One house (No. 15, for example) retains its fine ogee windows and the pointed arch of its old doorway. The street as a whole is, indeed, one of the least modernized in Geneva.

The alleys of old Geneva are fast disappearing, and with them will vanish a characteristic and intimate feature of the ancient city. There are certain alleys in the southern town which are worth exploring. The Passage des Barrières, near the Madeleine, with its steep stairs and its suspicious twists and turns, is certainly picturesque; while the alley that leads from No. 24 Rue Verdaine to the Rue de la Fontaine conveys a sense almost of alarm. A narrow subway, like a working in a mine, leads to a flight of stone stairs. At the bottom of the stairs the alley skirts the base of a round tower which looks into a dank yard. Then follow a dark tunnel and finally, with some relief, the daylight of another street.

The most uncanny alleys, however, are on the other side of the Rhone. Notable are those that lead from the Rue du Temple to the bank of the stream, together with a few that slink out of the Rue Cornavin. They recall to mind every horrible story that is concerned with the darker life of a mediæval town. Here is the narrow

entry that one armed man could hold against a score. Here is the doorway, deep sunken in shadow, where the assassin with the cloak would wait, and there the steps that lead to the suspicious half-open door. There are square vents in walls, each guarded by an iron grille, that let the light into no one knows what chambers of horror. There is the courtyard, green with mould and dark as a pit, that is made a haunted place by reason of the dust-covered windows which spy into it story above story. These by-ways are deserted. They are not places to linger in, for there is an atmosphere of uneasiness about them which persists until the sunlight and the open air are once more reached. It needs but little fancy to people them with a hundred terrors, to imagine oneself chased down these nightmare lanes and to find no way of escape, to detect footsteps creeping round the corner, to see a white face at one of the dreadful windows, or to have the silence of a hollow courtyard rent by a heart-chilling shriek.

V

THE ESCALADE

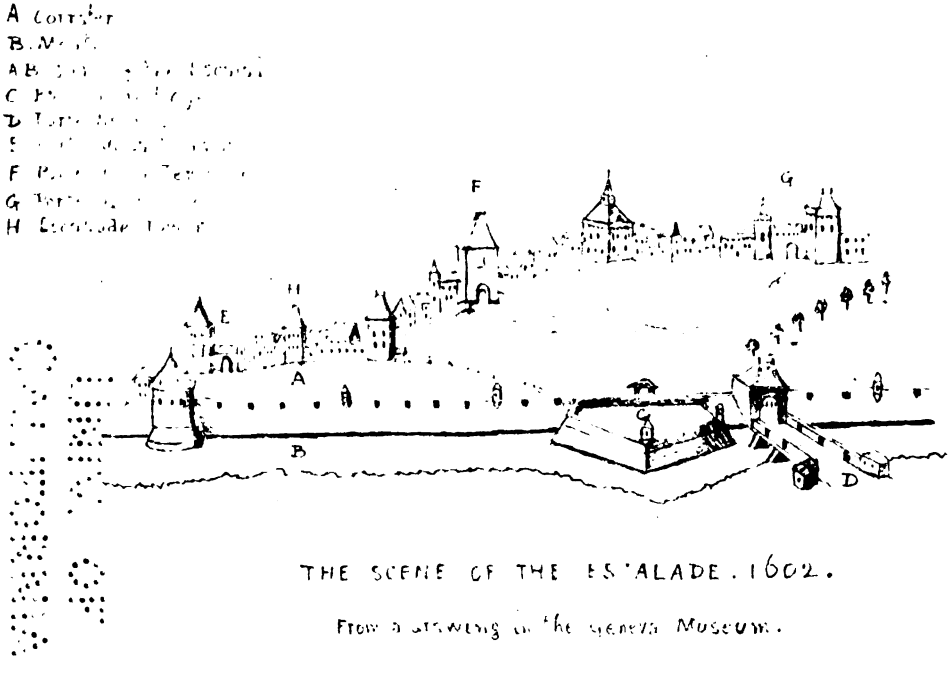
ONE of the most dramatic events in the history of Geneva was the treacherous attempt to take the town on December 11, 1602—an adventure known as the Escalade. It failed; and the people of Geneva still continue to rejoice in their victory as each December comes round. No visitor can be long in Geneva without being reminded, by monument, tablet or relics, of the Escalade. The aggressor was the Duke of Savoy. Savoy never for long relaxed its efforts to seize the city, for it was obsessed by the ambition.

In 1602 Geneva and Savoy were at peace. Indeed in the early part of that year some notables of Savoy had visited the city in order to discuss certain matters of common interest. They were smiling and conciliatory gentlemen who made themselves most agreeable and who yielded to Geneva's demands with great bonhomie. They admired the city and were especially interested in the walls. The Genevese felt this to be a compliment, for they were very proud of their walls. That a Savoyard should be found at night measuring the height of the wall with a stone attached to a string was regarded as the act of an enthusiast. Spring, summer and autumn went by, but nothing was heard of Savoy except kindly greetings, and yet the Duke, unable to take Geneva by force, had resolved to sneak into the city at night and massacre the inhabitants.

This unheroic enterprise was planned for the darkest night of the year—December 11, which in the calendar of to-day would be December 21. An army was to lie in wait in the outskirts of Geneva while a picked body of 300 men were to creep into the town by scaling the walls. The leader of the scaling party was Brunaulieu, who knew the city well and hated it still better. His company was worthily equipped. Their helmets and breastplates were blackened so as to be less easily seen. They were provided with dark lanterns, with hammers to smash in doors, huge pincers to cut chains, petards and a horrible kind of two-pronged fork on a long pole. Laden on mules were ladders in sections which could be lengthened or shortened at will. These ladders were spiked at the foot for firmer holding, while at the top they were covered with felt to muffle sound. Other mules carried hurdles and faggots to be laid in the moat, which was now at its lowest.

Before the Porte Neuve was closed for the night a panting countryman hurried in to announce that he had seen troops advancing towards Geneva. He was curtly told in reply that he was dreaming and was advised to drink less wine. A little later a cavalier passed through the gate and repeated the news, adding that the men were of Savoy. Whereupon the officer of the guard, pointing to the great wall rising from the moat, asked sarcastically, "Are these Savoyards birds that they can fly over walls and ditches?"

The plan of attack will be understood by reference to the sketch opposite this page. One party was to climb over the wall of the Corraterie, seize the Porte de la Monnaie, on the one hand, and the city side of the



SCENE OF THE ESCALADE

Porte Neuve on the other. A body of men hidden outside the Porte Neuve were to rush that gate as soon as the signal was given that the advanced party had accomplished its objects. The attack was timed for 4 A.M.

A little after midnight the men with the ladders crept across the Plainpalais towards the wall. It was nervous work, for it was pitch-dark and cold. The least noise alarmed them, even the stumbling of a mule or a gust of wind among the reeds. Once a hare darted across the line and so terrified the men in the van that they stopped to cross themselves and, with chattering teeth, to mutter a prayer. When the moat was reached a flock of wild duck was disturbed and dashed into the darkness with great quacking and flapping of wings. The guard at the Monnaie heard the flutter of these ducks, but merely remarked sleepily, "That otter is busy again."

It may here be explained that the Corraterie (now the street of that name) was a rough level space between the town and the wall. The town was at this point represented by the backs of the houses that—on the other side—looked into the Rue de la Cité. There were here three gates, the Monnaie, the Tertasse and the Treille, the positions of which are still easily identified. There were certain alleys that opened at one end into the street and at the other into the Corraterie, as they do to this day. The site of the Bastion d'Oie is now occupied by the Rath Museum; the Porte Neuve stood on the town side of the present Place Neuve, while the wall beyond it was that against which the new monument to the Reformation is erected.

The ladders were put in place with much whispering

and trepidation, but little eagerness was shown in making the ascent. At the foot of the ladder stood a lean Scots Jesuit, named Alexander Hume, who exhorted those who were about to mount, giving to each a piece of paper with a text on it which would preserve the holder from shot, steel and sudden death. Hume, with a little ill-timed imagery, told the hesitating soldiers that the ladders were steps to Heaven. This was not reassuring, as the men did not wish to go to Heaven at that particular moment and, moreover, preferred some other route than the ladder. However, they crept up shivering and, climbing over the wall, hid under the parapet.

When about 200 had taken this unsteady road to Paradise a soldier at the Monnaie Gate, hearing a noise in the direction of the moat, warned his corporal, one François Bousezel. The two started off with a lantern towards the ramparts, calling out, at each nervous step, "*Qui vive?*" They had not gone far into the black night when the corporal was felled by an invisible halberd which crashed upon him in the dark. He dropped dead —the first victim of the Escalade. He was a velvet merchant and lived in the Bourg-de-Four in that house which now bears, as a sign, a sea shell. His companion incontinently fired off his harquebus and fled back to the gate screaming "*Alarme! alarme! Aux armes!*" This was at 2.30 A.M.

The guard at the Monnaie were aroused and a drummer boy, beating his drum, hurried into the town sending a thrill of panic through each silent street as he panted up to the Hôtel de Ville. The Rue de la Cité was soon in commotion. Windows were thrown open, and every nightcapped head that popped out yelled the

same cry into the empty lane: "In Heaven's name what is the matter?" Bolts were shot back, doors were thrown open, and men, half-dressed and with any odd weapon in their hands—a pike, a sword, a shovel or a pick—rushed into the street. Dogs barked, women screamed, lights appeared at every window, while the flare of torches cast fantastic shadows upon the balconied houses. In a moment, above the hubbub in the street, came a sound, deep, hollow and ominous, the clang of the great bell, La Clémence, tolling the alarm.

The guard at the Porte de la Monnaie was soon driven back (they were only six in all), and the Savoyards rushed into the little Place de Notre-Dame du Pont crying "*Vive Savoie!*" This was a small triangular space—indicated by the present Escalade fountain—between three gates, the Monnaie opening on to the Corraterie, the City Gate at the bottom of the Rue de la Cité, and the Rhone Gate that led into the square now called the Place Bel Air. Between the two gates last named, and facing the Monnaie Gate, was a small low house that had once been the Mint. It is shown in old prints[1] as a house of two stories only. Here lived Mère Royaume, a woman of 60, who became the heroine of the Escalade. The little *place* was crowded with the Savoyards, and no doubt from every window some article was hurled down upon them with curses, if only it were an old boot, a chair or a log of wood. Mère Royaume did better. She dropped out of her window a heavy iron pot or *marmite*—as much as she could lift. It fell upon the head of a soldier of Savoy and killed him. This first

[1] "Histoire Populaire du Canton de Genève." Geneva, 1905, page 57. The Monnaie Gate was destroyed in 1831.

enemy casualty seems to have heartened the Genevese, for they poured into the *place* with a roar like thunder and drove the invaders back through the Monnaie Gate into the Corraterie.

There was a house (No. 8) in the Rue de la Cité that belonged to Julien Piaget. It was entered by an alley leading from the street to the Corraterie. The door on the street side was locked, but the other door was open. Here the Savoyards made an entry, but were met by the Piagets' servant, one Abraham de Batista, who, armed with a sword, gallantly held the passage. Dame Piaget—a lady of resource—was alone in the house. She first of all barricaded the front door which opened into the alley and then threw into the street the key of the locked entry to the alley, so that the Genevese were able to enter. They found Batista dead at the alley end, and, stepping over his body, fell on the Savoyards and drove them back to the Corraterie.

Like encounters took place all along the line. At the Tertasse Gate a sortie was made, led by Jean Canal, the syndic, a man of 63. He rushed ahead of his party armed only with a sword, but was at once cut down, while by his side was killed Bogueret, the architect of the Hôtel de Ville. Their deaths were avenged; for the Genevese fell upon the intruders with such violence that they drove them down the hill to the Porte Neuve.

While all this confused street fighting was in progress Brunaulieu was making a fierce attack on the Porte Neuve. The twenty Genevese who composed the guard were soon dislodged and fled in disorder up to the Porte de la Treille. That gate gained, they shut and bolted the iron-studded door behind them and "hoped for the

day." The Savoyards pursued them up the slope, yelling, so far as their breath would allow, "*Ville gagnée! Ville gagnée!*" They found the door too stout for even a dozen hammers, so a cry was raised for Picot, the famous *pétardier*, to come and blow it up. Picot came, planted his petard, and was about to light it when the portcullis fell with a fearful thud, crushing Picot to the ground beneath its iron heel. There he lay with the petard by his side and the fuse still aglow in his dead hand. A young soldier named Isaac Mercier, seeing the danger, had quietly mounted on to the roof of the gate and had set free the chain of the portcullis. By his wit the town was saved.

While the Savoyards, with heated talk, were debating what next they should do a sound fell on their ears that struck them suddenly silent with their mouths agape. It was the boom of a cannon. An ingenious gunner had fired a culverin from the Bastion d'Oie along the wall with such good purpose that the ladders were swept down and fell into the moat. The retreat of the Savoyards was thus cut off. The men of Geneva, pouring out of the Tertasse and Monnaie Gates, fell upon them with shouts of victory. The women threw lighted straw out of the windows that opened on the Corraterie and so made the slope blaze like the day and the crowd of men glow like goblins in the glare of a furnace.

The Savoyards gave way. Some escaped by the Porte Neuve; some jumped over the wall and were drowned in the moat; others surrendered and others were killed. By 5.30 A.M. all was over and Geneva was safe. In this gallant defence Geneva lost 17 killed; but of the enemy 54 were dead—including Brunaulieu, their

leader—while 13 were taken prisoners. The 13 were hanged on the Bastion d'Oie next day at two o'clock in the afternoon. Thus ended the Escalade.

In the Geneva Museum are the relics of this stirring adventure, and very interesting they prove to be. There are the very ladders that were placed against the wall, the helmets and cuirasses worn by the scaling party, their arms, the hammers and hatchets that they carried, the dark lanterns, the horrible two-pronged forks and the petards like massive gallon pots with handles. Here also are the helmet worn by the *pétardier* Picot (it weighs nearly 25 lbs.) and the culverin that shot down the ladders. This notable piece of ordnance is about eight feet long, has a muzzle aperture of one and a half inches and is a breech-loader. In a separate case is Brunaulieu's very ornate sword, but Madame Royaume's cooking-pot is not to be found among the exhibits.

Many portraits no doubt exist of those who did great things on the immortal night of the Escalade, but I know only two of them. The one is of the Duke, the other is of Mère Royaume. Madame Royaume's portrait is a head carved in stone over the portal of a quite modern building. The house stands on the site of a tower near the Monnaie Gate which was in the thick of the fighting and which was called, in after years, the Escalade Tower. It was ruthlessly pulled down in 1903. Madame Royaume's head is that of an elderly lady in a nightcap. A look of contentment beams on her determined face as if there still was ringing in her ears the comforting sound of an iron pot coming in contact with an alien skull.

— *A* —

FROM GENEVA TO THE DRANSE

VI

HERMANCE AND YVOIRE

THE shores of the Lake from Geneva to the mouth of the Dranse are comparatively low. They form a somewhat steep bank behind Cologny, but farther east assume a gentler slope and, here and there, sink almost to a flat. The great mountains are far away and invisible from the steamer. Certain isolated hills, however, springing from the plain, follow the coast line. These are Les Voirons running from the level of Geneva to Corsier, the Mont de Boisy between Hermance and Yvoire and the sharp ridge of Allinges, with its ruins, 2½ miles beyond Thonon.

The shores, all the way, belong to a luxuriant country which will remind an Englishman of Dorset or Devon or the banks of the upper Thames. There are no formal vineyards to mar the country by mathematical plots and formal lines. The vines are grown upon the branches of dead trees, are irregularly disposed and form a picturesque feature in the landscape. If the country has any distinctive character it is that bestowed upon it by the number of Lombardy poplars which are ranged, in companies and in sentinel-like ranks, along this beautiful green shelf.

Cologny is a suburb of Geneva, a suburb of fine villas and formal gardens marked by every evidence of

comfort and wealth. It was here, in the Villa Diodati, that Byron stayed; but as villas change in a hundred years it is well to turn to a contemporary print to see what manner of house it was in 1816. The plate shows a plain cottage-like building on a terrace facing the Lake. It possesses two stories with three windows on each floor, but it hardly attains to the ornate standard of the Cologny of the present day.

Bellerive is another village de luxe. There was an abbey here which was founded in the 12th century and was destroyed by the Genevese in 1536. The pinnacle of the altar of this abbey is preserved in the Geneva Museum. It takes the curious form of a tower by the side of which stands a lady crowned who is almost as tall as the tower itself. At Bellerive in 1667 the Duke of Savoy established a port and citadel in order to encourage and protect the trade of Geneva. The present attitude of Bellerive would seem to protest against the absurdity of this project, for, like its neighbour La Belotte, Bellerive is given up to mere enjoyment, to boating and sailing, to lolling in hammocks and sprawling upon lawns. As for commerce, it might go hang.

Of some other stopping places on this shore there is little to be said. Corsier, Anières, Coudrée-Sciez and Anthy-Séchex are scarcely more than names associated with a tiny pier, a café in a meadow, a bored *douanier* and a road coming down from the hinterland from villages which are out of sight and from crossways where a farm track or a lane stumbles into the route to the Lake. In the shade by the pier there may be a gig which has brought some country folk to the steamer

HERMANCE, FROM THE LAKE

HERMANCE

or an ox-wagon waiting for stores from Geneva. At Coudrée-Sciez conditions are quite elemental. Here are merely a row of poplars, a landing stage, a hut and a road which skips coquettishly out of sight. Beyond these suggestions of human life there is nothing to dispel the idea that the country is deserted. Anyone who left the steamer here would apparently have to wander far before he came in touch with his kind.

The places of less indistinctness in this section of the Lake are Hermance, Nernier, Yvoire and Beauregard and, near the Dranse, the town of Thonon. **Hermance** is a frontier village by the boundary which divides France from Switzerland. The place itself is Swiss. The frontier is not formidable. It consists of a tiny rivulet in a gulley of trees. In the summer-time a mouse could cross over from Switzerland to France without swimming, or a lady could make the passage with the assurance that the water would not cover the heel of a fashionable shoe.

If those who visit the Lake were asked to indicate the prettiest village on its shores, I think that the majority would name Hermance. It is old-fashioned and unspoiled. It will call to mind the little riverside village of England as it was fifty years ago, before the day of the irreverent Bank Holiday and the yelling charabanc.

There is little need to describe it. It is just a pretty village. Seen from the Lake it seems to be buried in a wood, so girt about is it by trees. Above the mass of green stand up a mediæval tower, the bronze-coloured steeple of a church and the brown roofs of an ancient house or two. There is a child-like *place*

by the water's edge made to look grown-up by a few clipped plane trees and some benches for the village gossips.

The road is wide and without a pavement. The cottages are covered with wistaria or clematis. Along the outside gallery of the house is trained a vine and over the grey wall a pear tree lolls. On a strip of grass by the wayside fishing nets are drying. Here a flower garden makes a sudden blaze of colour like a burst of music; while across the way is a farmyard in agreeable disorder.

There are yet other things in the village—an old stone cross in the shadow of a tree, a splashing fountain, a café half-hidden by oleanders in tubs and, that delight of every village, the bewildered general shop with its confusing smells. A breeze from the Lake, idling down the street, brings with it the consciousness of an unseen stretch of water together with the perfume of roses, the smell of burning wood in a kitchen and the odour of roasting coffee from the courtyard of the inn.

The town was founded in 1025 by Hermengarde, Queen of Burgundy, and it is from this lady that it derives its name. Later, the Lords of Faucigny fortified the place, surrounded it with walls and with a moat, and built the castle of which one fine tower still remains intact. Here in the 13th century the fair Beatrice of Faucigny held her court, took the town under her care and—about the year 1290—established and endowed the church.

The town was attacked and despoiled by the Bernese in 1536 and again in 1589. On the latter occasion Hermance very rashly resisted; with the result that the Bernese practically destroyed the place, pulling down the

YVOIRE (CASTLE ON RIGHT)

walls, demolishing the church and leaving only the great tower of the castle standing, since that was beyond their power to destroy. As the more adventurous spirits in Hermance had the habit of pouncing upon Genevese boats and were, in fact, no better than pirates, the port was filled up and the once thriving town and fortress were reduced to a mere fishing village and, unintentionally, to a place of much fascination.

The tower stands upon a hillock just above the village. It is round, is of immense size and has recently (1913-14) been restored with great consideration. It was built in the 13th century and provides as vivid an idea of the donjon of old days as any tower in Savoy. The present church appears to have been erected in 1687, some years after the disastrous visit of the Bernese. It is a fine building, the decoration of which is effective and in exceptional taste; but it has been so ruthlessly restored as to obliterate the interest that it must once have possessed. By the side of the church is the Chapel of St. Catherine, now mutilated beyond recovery. It is a good specimen of the architecture of the 15th century and is fully described by J. Mayor in his well illustrated work.[1]

Nernier is a modest village or little town that has seen better days, but is still a pleasant place by reason of the many queer old houses that are to be found in its almost silent streets or springing from the water's edge. It has an ancient church with a somewhat remarkable stone steeple. The château that once belonged to Godefroy de Bouillon, the crusader, is now represented by a modern building. It is curious how persistently

[1] "L'ancienne Genève." Geneva, 1896.

isolated little incidents cling to certain places until they comprise almost its sole store of history. The incident always recorded about Nernier is to the effect that Lamartine, the poet, stayed here in 1815, that he lived in the house of a boatman named Favre at the charge of 20 sous a day "*nourriture compris*," and that he always spoke of these days as the happiest of his life. He seems to have been looked after by the boatman's very kindly daughter—a young woman of 25—who fed the poet on eggs, milk and cheese to his complete comfort.

From its history Nernier is shown to have been a place of some account even in Roman days. It once had a castle of its own, stout walls and a couple of gates, and was happy in that it was possessed by the beautiful Beatrice of Faucigny. Among the illustrious persons who have been Lords of Nernier was (in 1433) Nicod de Menthon, an ambassador to England.[1] The church is mentioned in a papal bull of the year 1250. It was a dependency of the great abbey of Filly near by, of the ruins of which only the faintest traces now exist.

Yvoire stands at the entrance to the Petit Lac, where the wider expanse of water suddenly narrows. The distance from Yvoire to the point of Promenthoux, on the opposite shore, is hardly three miles. Yvoire was thus in old days the Gibraltar of the Lake. A great many visitors, and among them many artists, come to Yvoire every year, and the inhabitants never cease to wonder why they come, for the place is no other than a small village and a poor one. The residents would probably say that if the stranger wished to see the glories

[1] "Mémoires et documents de l'Académie Chablaisienne," *Tome* xii. Thonon 1898.

A GATE OF YVOIRE

STREET IN YVOIRE

of the Lake he should go to Montreux, where everything is new, where the latest fashions are in vogue and where the whole place appears to be bursting with the good things of life.

Yvoire, poor as it is, has yet a little of that wealth which is beyond the dream of avarice and which money bags cannot purchase. It is a little fortified mediæval town which has still around it its ancient walls and is still entered by its ancient gates. Its castle still seems to be keeping watch over the strait, while there is a tower in Yvoire that in height and strength is formidable still and only needs its portcullis to be brought back to become again an entry hard to force. Moreover the family who, as Lords of Yvoire, held the castle 260 years ago, hold it still.

The original walls of Yvoire were built in the 14th century and have been many times strengthened and restored. The town gates, with their pointed arches, belong probably to the 16th century, while the age of the founding of the castle would go back to a period before even the walls were made. A Pierre of Yvoire figures in the records of 1264 as giving certain woodland rights to the convent of Filly; while in 1289 Antelme d'Yvoire is found doing homage—and no doubt very agreeable homage—to the fair Beatrice of Faucigny.

Yvoire was a place that bred stout warriors and bold sailormen. Its boys played at soldiers as soon as they could go alone. The young women could handle a boat as deftly as a man. The mother would leave her baby to carry powder kegs to the battlements; while the housewife would stay her cooking to boil water to be poured on any who dared assail the gate. If accounts

be true, Yvoire was at one time a nest of pirates and the terror of the Lake. When a merchant craft on its way to the Rhone sighted a covey of boats pulling out from the town all hope was lost, unless a delivering wind swept down from the east; for the rhythm of the oars of the boats of Yvoire was as ominous a sound as the tramp of marching men.

Yvoire, it appears, has many times changed hands. In 1366 it was sold by the Count of Savoy to Antelme de Miolans. In 1402 it passed by marriage to the Ravorée family, and in 1494 was sold to Georges d'Antioche, and later (in 1684) to Antoine Fornier.[1] Finally, in 1655, it came into the possession of the famous family of Bouvier, and it is that family which holds it now.

A Ferdinand Bouvier was Lieutenant Governor of Chillon in 1588 (*see* Chapter XXV). His brother, Jehan Bouvier, was the redoubtable Jehan of the Iron Arm. This hardy but rather mythical warrior had lost a hand in battle and had replaced it by an arm of iron. It would seem that he was one of the defenders of the castle of Yvoire in 1600, many years before that fortress passed into the hands of his family. Jehan of the Iron Arm is the subject of a famous romance[2] in which he is described as Jean d'Yvoire, but the title is unfounded, as the château did not come into the possession of the Bouviers in his lifetime.

The two gate towers of Yvoire are on the south or land side of the town. In ancient days they bid defiance to all on the high road who would dare to enter unasked,

[1] "Mémoires, etc., de l'Académie Chablaisienne," *loc. cit.*

[2] "Jean d'Yvoire au Bras de Fer," par J. Fazy. Paris, 1840.

YVOIRE: THE CHURCH

but now on each mediæval postern is merely a gentle warning to the effect that motor cars are not allowed within the walls. Between the two gateways runs the ancient wall of the town with its battlements still in evidence. At the foot of the wall is the moat, which is now devoted to the culture of potatoes.

There is nothing in Yvoire that could be called a street. Its lanes are narrow, loose and very confused. They are also very dirty. The houses are of a humble, despondent type, are old and decrepit, and therefore picturesque. Their general untidiness is excessive and they are patched and re-patched like an old shoe. The church has been modernized, has a flat ceiling, square windows and walls covered monotonously with plaster. The copper-coloured steeple, however, is charming and makes an attractive object when Yvoire is viewed from the Lake. That the church has been "done up" in recent years is evident, since Read, writing in 1897, speaks of it as "an old church lit by loopholes."

The château rises from the water's edge. It is a square, simple and solid block of masonry with a flat roof and with windows which belong to various periods, for some are pointed and some are square. At the four corners of the building are the remains of round turrets. Upon the land side of the château are a square tower with a pointed roof and the remains of a moat. There are no battlements and no gun emplacements; but, on the other hand, ivy and climbing roses give an air of much gentleness to the hardy old fortress. There are certain gardens in the ancient town and many trees, which very graciously and charitably temper its poverty and bestow some comfort upon its extreme old age.

VII

THE TRAGEDY OF BEAUREGARD

THE stranger who wanders in the district between Hermance and Nernier will be struck by the persistence and apparent pride with which all signposts point the way to the Port of Tougues. It may be true that "all roads lead to Rome," but certainly in this area they all lead to the Port of Tougues. There would seem to be no possibility of escaping this haven; for to the undecided there is no alternative between the Port of Tougues, on the one hand, and the rest of the universe on the other.

In approaching this much proclaimed place one expects to come upon a wharf of stone where cranes are wheezing laboriously, where there are bales of merchandise and lusty men rolling barrels to and fro. There should be also ropes and anchors and ships in that déshabillé which they assume when lying in port.

Such impressions will not be realized, for Tougues, when reached, is found to be represented by a clump of poplars in a silent field, from the edge of which a very fragile pier ventures out into the Lake. There is no sign of human life and the road stops abruptly at the beach, as if overcome by the shock of a cruel disillusion. Among the shadows on one side of the road is a café, in front of which are a few tables and chairs. On the

other side is a dwelling house vaguely defined. The commerce of the place is represented by a heap of stones for the mending of roads. Such is the Port of Tougues to which the signposts point with such assurance.

The real interest of the Port of Tougues is vicarious and depends upon the fact that it adjoins the famous Château of Beauregard and is, indeed, on the edge of the wood in which that castle lies. Beauregard stands in a clearing open to the Lake, where it occupies the crest of a green slope that rises gently from the beach. It is a very ancient place, for it was a stronghold as long ago as 1326, and its square tower, with walls three metres thick, is believed to belong to that period. It has been much added to and more than once rebuilt, notably in the 15th century, as is suggested by the date 1573 on the tower of the château.[1] Until the 16th century Beauregard was held by the family of de Balleyson. It then belonged to the Allinges, and finally to the illustrious house of de Costa, in which family it still remains.

The most famous member of this family was the Marquis Henri Costa de Beauregard, who occupied the château in the latter end of the 18th century and was one of the victims of the French Revolution. He kept a diary, and his memoirs, translated and edited by Charlotte M. Yonge, provide a remarkably graphic picture of the sufferings of a noble family during the time of the Terror.[2]

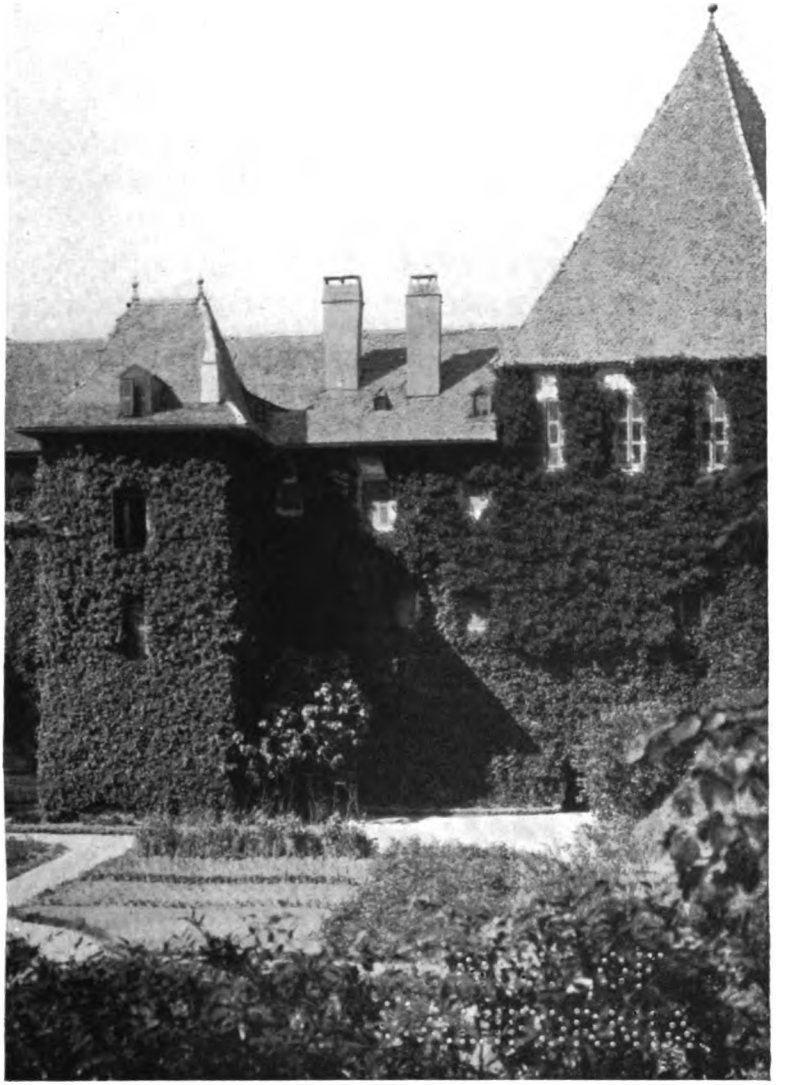
The marquis married in 1777, and was with his wife and family at Beauregard when the Revolution burst

[1] "Mémoires, etc., de l'Académie Chablaisienne," *Tome* xii. Thonon, 1898.

[2] "A Man of Other Days." London, 1877.

forth. The shrieking hordes who were to wipe out the old regime and remake the world fell upon Beauregard in 1792. The marquise and her children fled to Lausanne across the water. The marquis and his favourite son Eugéne joined the residue of the loyal army then holding out precariously in the mountains. He distinguished himself as an officer, so far as distinction was possible in an army whose deeds were doomed to be inglorious and whose inevitable fate was to fail.

His great delight was in his son. In all his letters Eugéne was the one bright figure among a gloomy company, and to have him with him was the solace of his life. With the marquis also was his old servant Comte who, although paid no wages and subjected to all the miseries of a hopeless campaign, declined to leave his master or to abate any detail of his service. On one terrible morning Eugéne was killed in an unprofitable skirmish, and the grief of the poor father was pitiable to witness. It was a sorrow that never ceased to cloud his days. In the meantime the marquise and her children were living in Lausanne in "frightful poverty" which she bore with great courage, for she was—as her letters show—a very gallant lady. She thus describes the wretched lodging in Lausanne: "The children and I live in a room with a red tile floor, faded curtains, three horse-hair chairs, an old white stove and the little table upon which I write to you. . . . What does that signify? And yet, Henri, I have under my window a poor little rose tree that has sprung up by chance among the nettles, like your image among my tears." She does not add—as she might have done—that her life was a constant fight against starvation.



BEAUREGARD

In 1796, after four years of misery, the marquis was free to join his wife at Lausanne. He came accompanied by the faithful Comte. The journey from Turin to Lausanne by the St. Bernard Pass occupied twelve days. They reached the gates of Lausanne towards evening. The marquis found his wife and children waiting for him in the road. The meeting was most pathetic for, besides the death of their boy, so much that was terrible had happened since they parted at Beauregard. He hardly knew her. He simply saw, standing outside the gate, a lady in black who was as pale as death and who, as he approached, cried "Henri! Henri!" and threw herself into his arms. "When they came to themselves they looked at one another like strangers. She was an old woman with wrinkles and grey hair. He was bent and would have been taken for an old man."

The first intent of the marquis when he had settled at Lausanne was to visit his old home at Beauregard, if he could elude the minions of the Republic. He knew that the château had been pillaged from cellar to attic and partially wrecked, that a portion had been burned and that it was tenantless. He started one morning in a sailing-boat, taking with him an old friend and his servant Comte. They met with a contrary wind, so that it was not until nearly sundown that they reached the château.

They landed on the beach and walked up the familiar path to the house. The house was silent and evidently deserted. The rosy light of the setting sun fell full upon it, showing the black streaks left by smoke and flame, the gaping windows and the half-charred shutters hanging from the walls. In the once trim courtyard

were masses of burnt wood, fragments of shattered furniture, rags that were once fine curtains, begrimed bits of clothing, tiles and heaps of broken glass.

The door was open, for it had been battered in. The marquis entered with a shudder and walked from room to room, stumbling over collections of rubbish and of fallen plaster. The memories that the place recalled were the memories of a lifetime, but they were all so marred as to become a mockery. Treasure after treasure was missing. In the place of his wife's portrait was a dark square on the wall. Sacred cupboards had been ransacked and everywhere were ruin, defilement and outrage. "This was her room," the marquis muttered as he passed along the corridor, "and this was mine." One room he would not enter, but he asked Comte to go into it alone. It was the room of his dead son Eugéne.

As the three were leaving the château in the uncertain light they were startled by a voice that issued from the depths of the building. It was an unearthly voice that screamed "Off with you! Off with you! I am master here. Oh! what a fire it was when they burned it down." They all recognized the voice as that of a poor idiot boy named Jacques whom the marquise had looked after and provided for. He apparently had alone clung to the desolate building, which he haunted like a demented spirit.

The three made their way to the boat and pushed off. They lingered for a moment before hoisting the sail, in order to look once again at the old house which was now but a black shadow among the trees. As they looked, standing up in the boat bare-headed, there rang

out in the silence of the dusk the voice of the idiot boy shrieking the "Marseillaise." Such was the home-coming of the noble Marquis of Beauregard.

When the Terror had passed away the marquis and his family were able to return to Beauregard. The old château was restored, and under its roof he and his devoted wife ended their days in peace.

The château, as already stated, is on a green slope open to the Lake. On all other sides it is surrounded by trees. That part of the building which faces the water is plain and stolid and as glum as the back of an institution. It is of three stories, all of which are provided with square windows. Its walls, of a ruddy grey, are covered with ivy. The entrance to the house is on the east side, where is a comfortable courtyard between two segments of the building. The block to the left is made up of the old donjon, a huge, low square tower surmounted by a conical roof of most amazing height. Indeed, viewing the structure as a whole, there would appear to be almost as much roof as tower. The main building is made picturesque by a series of oval windows below the eaves, such as were common in French mansions about the end of the 18th century. The west side of the house, with its small projecting tower looking out upon a little formal garden, is the most intimate and homely part of the château. The beach where the marquis landed is very pretty. It is a shelf of grey pebbles shaded by trees, and among the trees is the small path that he followed up to the house.

VIII

THONON

THONON, once the capital of Chablais, a fortress and the residence of princes, is now a place of small account. Its chief characteristics are negative. It possesses neither "sights" nor present interests. It is simply a provincial town that has seen better days and that has sought, in its old age, the quiet of obscurity. The Romans thought well of the spot, since they planted a town here. The Burgundians also were attracted by it, for, in the course of their violent lives, they made of Thonon a kind of robbers' castle or marauding outpost. But before even the Romans came or the Burgundians carried red riot through the land there was a lake village by the shore, built on a forest of piles by a nameless people.

The surroundings of Thonon explain how it came to be chosen as an abode of men. Here is a raised plateau that sweeps inland for miles till it comes to the foot of the guardian hills—the Mont d'Armonnaz and the Bois de la Comte. Towards the Lake it ends in a green bank which slopes suddenly to the beach. It must always have seemed that this edge of the plain, this crest of the bank, was a fitting place whereon to build a town. Here Thonon stands. On the east of the plateau is the majestic gorge of the Dranse; while on the west the plain stretches towards Geneva, becoming narrowed as

THONON

it goes by the *massif* of Les Voirons and of Mont Saleve. The whole plateau is magnificent, for it is luxuriantly green. The far hills, with their vast precipices, are capped with snow; while in the centre of the plain, on an isolated ridge, stand—clear-cut against the sky—the romantic ruins of Allinges. The view of this fair country, as approached from the west by the white road from Excenevex is, I think, one of the most appealing of its kind on the Lake, especially as in the foreground there glistens the blue bay of Coudrée.

Thonon is not a "season place," although it has its waters and its baths and is, indeed, proclaimed at the railway station to be "Thonon les Bains." It is one of those comfortable, contented towns that is busy all the year round with its own little affairs and does not encourage the stranger to intermeddle with its joys.

Thonon was from early years a fortified town. Its great walls and towers were built about the year 1290, and at the same period the castle was constructed. The castle became the residence of the Counts and Dukes of Savoy, and on that account Thonon became the most important place in Chablais. A plate of the castle as it was in 1540[1] shows a vast and imposing building on the brink of the plateau with a square donjon in the centre and a round tower at each bend of the wall. The castle, after violent changes of fortune, was taken by the French and Swiss in 1589, and was finally pulled down in 1626 after having been nearly destroyed by fire. There were five gates to Thonon,[2] but of these

[1] "Memoires et Documents de l'Académie Chablaisienne." *Tome* xxvi. 1913.

[2] Map of 1682 in "Histoire de Thonon," par L. E. Piccard. *Tome* i. Annecy, 1882.

and of the ancient walls no trace remains. The wall on the east followed the Rue des Granges and that on the west the present Boulevard Carnot. From this disposition it will be seen that the old town was small and its confines very limited.

Thonon, owing to its strategic position near the banks of the Dranse and to its importance as a seat of the ruling prince, figures prominently in the wars of the Middle Ages, sometimes with credit, sometimes without. It was swayed on occasion by this faction and on occasion by that. The attitude of the inhabitants in the presence of acute political movements was not always marked by a sense of proportion nor did it always express itself logically or with dignity. In this respect Thonon was not peculiar.

For example, at the time of the French Revolution, the spirit that prompted that upheaval spread to Savoy in the form of a blind revolt against all constituted authority and anything that implied control. The patriots of Thonon, after due discussion, concluded that they could best express their approval of the policy of the time by liberating the town drunkard who had been sent to prison by the arbitrary governor.[1] So they attacked the gaol door with bludgeons and hammers, battered it in, and scuttled down the corridor to find the oppressed winebibber. They found him; smacked him on the back; led him forth noisily into the street and proceeded to carry him round the town with shouts of triumph.

Surely there was never in the world such an emblem

[1] "Memoirs of the Marquis de Beauregard." Edited by Charlotte M. Yonge, London, 1877. Vol, I, page 127.

of liberty, of fraternity and of the heaven-born equality of man as this trembling drunkard, clinging with nervous hands to the arms of a tavern chair, with terror sweating from his bloated face as he rocked to and fro on the shoulders of an eddying mob, like a piece of wreckage in a torrent. They carried him round Thonon for the immoderate period of four hours, stopping, no doubt, for refreshment at various wine shops in their progress. At the end of the fourth hour the drunkard became so limp that he was of no further use as an emblem, for an emblem must be erect like a knight's pennon and not a thing like a sack of meat.

The site of the castle is the present Place du Château, an open square on the edge of the bank, shaded by many trees and affording a most gracious view. Just to the east of the *place* stood the convent of the Capuchins, built in 1602, but now indicated only by some remains embodied in the house which occupies its site. There were four other convents in Thonon, of which that of the Minimes alone calls for notice. It was founded in 1686 by Albert Eugène de Genève, Marquis de Lullin, and is now the hospital of the town. It is a fine Renaissance building, the windows of which are ornamented by elaborate stonework. The cloister that surrounds the court-yard is worthy of a palace. In the wall of the colonnade is a stone with the inscription, "Icy gist Gaspard de Genève, Marquis de Lullin," and the date June, 1619.

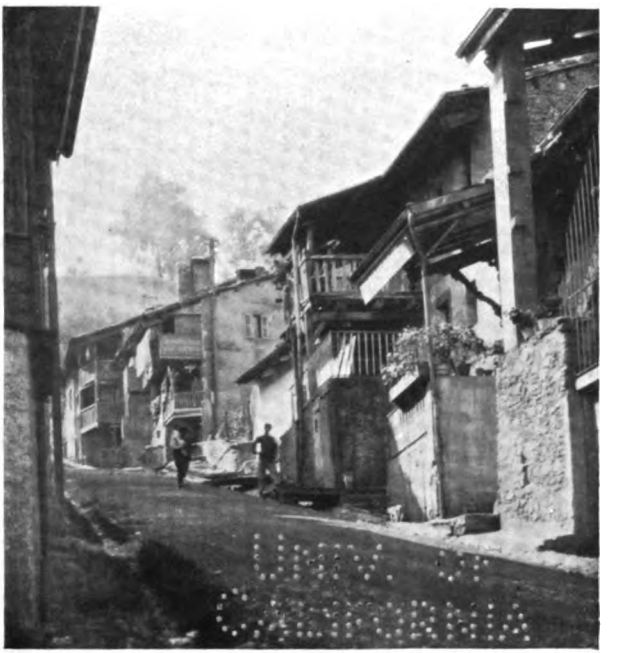
In the Rue Chante-Coq—now but a mean street—is a 16th century house, with a handsome stone doorway and elegant windows, that was once the residence of the Guillet-Monthoux family. No. 17 in the same street

was the house of a syndic of Thonon—one Pierre Fornier—who was converted by St. Francis and who entertained the great preacher within these walls. The Hôtel de Ville, a quite worthy building, stands in an old-world square that is pleasant to come upon, for it recalls the scenery of an 18th century romance. In the square is a curious stone fountain in the form of a column of unusual type. It is reputed to date from the 18th century, but has obviously been much renovated since that time.

The church is not commendable. Its façade is mean and otherwise expressionless, its interior irritating by reason of much restless and trashy ornamentation in the taste of two centuries ago. There is an old font by the entry which was used by St. Francis, and also a handsome organ-loft of wood and a pulpit with carved panels of much merit. From this pulpit St. Francis preached during his turbulent mission in Chablais. One interesting feature of the church is the crypt. It is entered with some difficulty (and with the aid of a candle) through a trap-door under the pulpit. The crypt has a cove roof supported by low columns and rounded arches. The capitals of the pillars are remarkable by their eccentricity. The structure is accredited to the 11th century, although some assign to it an earlier date. The place is filled with rubbish and is in woeful disrepair.

Opposite the church is a quaint little old house with an overhanging roof and on the ground floor a shop of the mediæval type in the shadow of an arch. It is occupied by a *fumiste* and maker of stoves. As the place is dark and cave-like and filled with strange things

THONON: ST. FRANCIS'S SHOP



RIVES BELOW THONON

in metal it could pass for the shop of an alchemist or a maker of coats of mail. On one of the shutters of the shop is fastened a cross of iron. It was in this shop that St. Francis took refuge from the violence of the Protestant mob, after preaching in the church of Thonon, and the cross of iron serves to keep in memory his timely deliverance.[1]

Near the foot of the bank upon which Thonon stands is the village of Rives. That it is a fishing village would be evident in the dark. It is made up of little old houses with outside stairs, wooden galleries and overhanging roofs. The life of the place appears to be carried on in the balconies or in the road, and the inhabitants to be mostly children. The road is steep, and at the top of the village is a stone basin for running water whence the supplies of the place are drawn. Any who would realize the village home of Jack and Jill, the kind of hill they climbed and the source at which they filled their pails should come to Rives. There is nothing lacking to complete the scene of that never-to-be-forgotten disaster.

At the bottom of the village, by the water's edge, is an immense, stolid building with white walls and ancient windows, many of which are closed by bricks. It is a sour-looking old place which seems to resent the indignity of being now used as a storehouse for plaster. On the roadside is a low, square tower looking as surly as a long neglected tower can look. There is another tower, smaller and less depressed in aspect, on the Lake front. This is the Château de Montjoux-St. Bernard. It belonged in 1405 to the noble family of Greysier,

[1] "Mémoires, etc., de l'Académie Chablaisienne." *Tome* xix, page 168.

and then to the lords of Ravorée, who ceded it in the 16th century to the monastery of Montjoux founded by St. Bernard of Menthon. It was burnt in 1557 and attacked and damaged during the Bernese invasion of 1591. It remained, however, in possession of the monks until the Revolution of 1798, when it was seized and sold as national property to the family of Favre of Thonon. Since that date its downfall appears to have been rapid.

From old prints it may be gathered that it has changed little in its general aspect, except that it once had a court-yard which reached to the water's edge and, on the west, a small chapel with a bell gable. Of neither court-yard nor chapel does any trace remain; while the construction of the harbour has altered the aspect of the little cove upon the margin of which the château stood. The large tower by the road was called the Tour des Langues because in old days the monks demanded from the inhabitants the tongue of every beast slaughtered in Rives. This was a very moderate tax, for in England at the present day they would have taken half of the entire animal.

IX

ROUND ABOUT THONON

OUT of the plain behind Thonon there arises suddenly a lofty ridge with a sharp edge like that of a chipped flint. On the jagged summit stand the ruins of **Allinges** — the most romantically placed ruins to be found along the Lake shore. The walls of the great keep can be seen for miles both from the water and the land. The castle would seem to realize that spectral château on a bleak cliff that figures in Gustave Doré's pictures and that belongs to the world of myths and legends.

Allinges is made up of two castles, each on a separate peak, together with an ancient chapel. The earlier castle—the Château Vieux—is on the eastern extremity of the ridge; the less ancient—the Château Neuf—is on its western point, where is also the chapel. In the gap between the two peaks was the long extinct village of old Allinges.

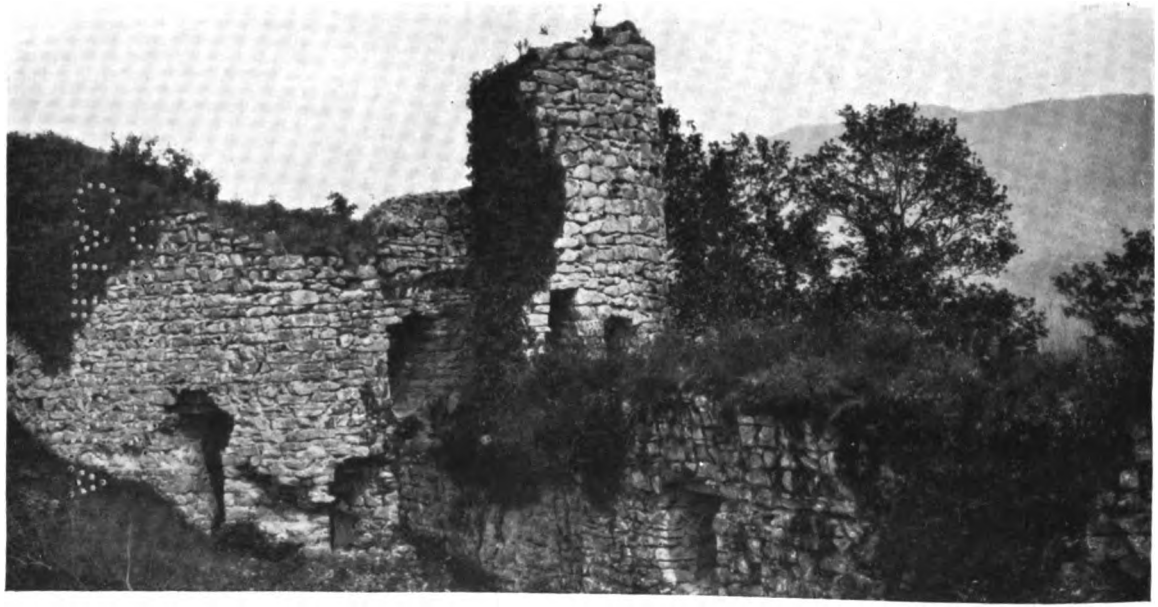
The older castle and the village were founded by the Burgundians in the 5th century.[1] They held it for a hundred years, when they were driven out by the Franks, who, fighting all the while, remained masters of Allinges until 879. No traces of the works of these periods remain. In 888 the new Burgundian Kingdom

[1] "Œuvres historiques de M. l'Abbé Gonthier." Thonon, 1901. *Tome* i.

was constituted by Rodolfe I. He seized Allinges, and his son, Rodolfe II (912-937), rebuilt the Château Vieux, added, at a later period, the Château Neuf and reconstructed the village between the two hills. A few relics of these Burgundian castles are said to be discoverable. It will be understood how it has come about that an edifice erected a thousand years ago is still described as "new." The Burgundians held on to Allinges until the dynasty came to an end in the days of the last king, Rodolfe III.

In or about 1078 the stronghold fell into the possession of the rich and powerful family of Allinges (hence the name of the place), who held it for some 200 years. In the 13th century the Lords of Faucigny[1] were masters of the hill, and a little later it passed into the hands of the Counts of Savoy. The history of this fortress—the most formidable in the country—involves a turbulent story which is far too long to follow. It was the scene of frequent alarms and periodic fighting, was many times besieged and many times changed masters. There was a period when the so-called old castle belonged to one baron and the new to another and when the two kept up a constant fight at dangerously close quarters. In 1536 the Swiss took the place and the banner of Berne was hoisted on the height with a cheer that could be heard at Thonon. In 1567 Allinges once more belonged to Savoy, but in December, 1600, it was besieged by the French, on which occasion the garrison surrendered and were allowed to march forth with drums beating and with all the honours of war. Once more

[1] One of the three provinces of Haute Savoie, the others being Genevois and Chablais.



THE CASTLE OF ALLINGES

Allinges returned to the Dukes of Savoy; when in 1708 Victor Amadeus II—he whose story is told in Chapter XV—finding himself confronted by a new war with France and fearing that Allinges would be hard to hold, dismantled the castles, blew them up and left them in the ruin in which they are found to this day.

Before their destruction there was little distinction in the matter of age between the one castle and the other. An old plate conveys a good idea of the double fortress as it appeared in 1682.[1] It shows a castle on either hill, both complete and both pertaining to the same period. They are very strongly fortified and are surrounded by a high machicolated wall with square towers at intervals in its circuit and with heavy outworks on the side of approach. From the centre of the Château Vieux rises a lofty keep, the remains of which form the most prominent feature in the ruins as they now appear.

Rodolfe II when he built the Château Neuf built also, on the same part of the hill, the little chapel which is still standing undisfigured and, indeed, but little changed. This 11th century chapel is one of the oldest in Savoy and has naturally been made a national monument. It is very plain, very small and very dark owing to the fact that the windows which light it are little more than slits deep sunk in the wall. It has a plain cove roof and the chancel is represented merely by an alcove or shallow apse. The walls of the recess are decorated by frescoes accredited to the 18th century, the subject being the Benediction of Christ. Above the roof is a *demi-tour* for the bell. Attached to the chapel is a

[1] "Œuvres historiques de M. l'Abbé Gonthier." Thonon, 1901. *Tome* i.

monastic building, with a round-arched arcade, which rather swamps the tiny church.

A memorable day in the history of the chapel was September 14, 1594. On that day two strangers, simply clad and without baggage, came on foot to the drawbridge of the castle of Allinges. One of them, a youth of 27, with a very gentle face, was Francis, son of the Count de Sales.[1] The other was his cousin, Louis de Sales. They were both priests, although not dressed in the garb of their order. They brought letters to the governor of the castle, from the Duke of Savoy and others, begging that Allinges would help in the work for the reconversion of Chablais. It was on this ridge that the mission began, for on the next morning St. Francis celebrated his first Mass in the little chapel. By 1598 or 1600 nearly the whole of Chablais had returned to the Catholic faith.

In approaching Allinges from Thonon it appears at first incredible that buildings could ever be erected where the ruins stand, for the ridge on the side towards the town is a rank precipice. It remains, however, to be discovered that there is an approach on the south side. The path leads through a stone gateway and by various outworks to the hill on which the chapel stands. The remains of the Château Neuf lie scattered among orchards and plots of grass where sheep are feeding. To the east is the mighty donjon of the Château Vieux, a mass so stupendous and so solid as to defy destruction. The ruins cover an immense area. Besides the walls there are the remains of towers, of bastions, of posterns and

[1] St. Francis was born at the Château of Sales, near Annecy, in 1567, and died at Lyons in 1622 in the gardener's cell of the Monastery of the Visitation.

THE CHAPEL OF ALLINGES

CONCISE

of covered ways, some green with ivy, some bare as a bleached bone. In the cleft of the rock between the two main hills the old town hid. During centuries of war it must have been as uneasy a dwelling as a robin's nest in a gun casemate. Where it cowered there is now a wood, in the quiet depths of which its very stones are as completely lost as are its troubles.

Just outside Thonon, near the Evian road, is the tiny hamlet of **Concise.** It is a place of no mean standing, for in 1098 it possessed a hospital, a castle and a priory of Augustins; while in 1250 it figures in a bull of Pope Innocent IV.[1] Concise is worth turning aside for a moment to see on account of its fascinating little church. This church is of great age, is the size of a small cottage and has a steeple with a quite ridiculous window in it. Within is a nave, with a flat ceiling like that of a room, and a choir with a faintly pointed roof. A minute chapel has been built out on one side, while over the entrance is a gallery with a kind of nursery rail. A more charming specimen of the little village church would be difficult to find.

At Concise and on the brink of the steep bank which looks down upon the beach stood the Tower of **La Fléchère.** When the French and the Swiss invaded Chablais in 1589 they laid siege to the castle of Thonon. The castle had a large garrison and was believed to be impregnable; but either from treachery or from cowardice the commandant surrendered before the assault was even commenced. Thonon having been disposed of, the victorious army marched on to La Fléchère. As this

[1] "Régeste Genevois avant l'Année, 1312." Geneva, 1866. "Haute Savoie," par A. Raverat. Lyons, 1872.

insignificant place had a garrison of only 18 men it was assumed that it would surrender even more promptly than Thonon. To the indignation of the Swiss leader the captain of the tower declined to yield and, furthermore, was not only defiant but inclined to be rude. The tower was surrounded by a host strong enough to capture a place four times its size; but it proved not easy to take and, owing to the lack of artillery, it began to be a question if it could be taken in any reasonable time.

The Swiss general was furious and swore he would hang the whole of the eighteen before dinner as a lesson to the rest of Savoy. But the dinner hour came and passed and the captain of the tower was still jeering from the battlements. The next step was to burn the gallant men out of their stronghold, and to effect this the adjacent buildings were set on fire. The tower became enveloped in flames and it was soon evident to the garrison of La Fléchère that there was nothing for it but to rush out of the building and surrender. This they did.

The whole of the eighteen were not hanged; but six of the number were selected for this particular treatment. It so happened that on the face of the tower was a projecting beam which would serve as an excellent gallows. The six were led out and lined up under the beam with their backs to the tower, just about the time of the setting of the sun. A difficulty arose as to an executioner. Whereupon one of the six, a corporal—in order to save his own neck—offered to hang his five old comrades. He hanged them one after the other, but asked the pardon of each in turn before the fatal moment came. The fifth and last man refused his pardon. The

THE DRANSE

corporal, however, put the rope round his neck and pushed him off the ladder as he had done with the rest of his late friends. As he was about to descend, pleased with his own happy escape, a ball from a Swiss musket passed through his breast.

In old prints La Fléchère is represented as a small, square building with a tower on either side of it and around it a battlemented wall.[1] As years went by the tower fell into decay and a Capuchin convent was built on its ruins. The convent, as it now appears, is a rambling building with square towers and with little about it that is of interest except the old garden in which it stands.

Between Concise and the river is the **Château of Thuyset.** It is a small château, but one of the most charming on account of its picturesque features and the care with which it has been preserved. It is old, for it was built in 1490 by the Allinges. After passing through other hands it was occupied in 1678 by the Lucinges, and finally, in 1688, came into the possession of the distinguished family of de Foras, to whom it still belongs. The building is square, has a very lofty roof with dormer windows, and is supported by two graceful towers, the survivors of the four towers with which the château was originally provided.

The River Dranse, where crossed by the Evian road, is a dull river. There is more bed than river, for in the summer the stream is so small as to be almost lost in the intolerable desert of ash-grey stones. The Dranse comes down from the mountains through a most beautiful rocky gorge, some miles in length, which is

[1] "Groot Stedeboek, van Piemont en van Savoye." The Hague, 1725.

much frequented by tourists in charabancs, who seem to be curiously fascinated by the very name of "gorge." On either bank of the river will be seen the remains of the old bridge of the Middle Ages. This bridge was constructed in the 15th century, was no less than 656 feet long, and carried in its course some 29 arches. It was blown up in 1814 during the war that was raging at that period. The bed of the river has been very much narrowed in modern times by the construction of an embankment, with the result that the greater part of the mediæval bridge is now on dry land. Its roadway is narrow, being about 10 feet wide, and is protected on each side by a wall which is rapidly tumbling away. The road would serve still for the packhorse and the litter, but not for the blustering motor lorry or the charabanc.

THE OLD BRIDGE OVER THE DRANSE

X

RIPAILLE

ON the level promontory which lies between the Dranse river and the Bay of Thonon stands the famous Château of Ripaille surrounded by a gloomy wood. A full history of Ripaille, of the great people who dwelt there and of the strange things they did, is furnished by M. Bruchet in a fine volume of some 600 pages.[1]

Ripaille owes its origin to a remarkable woman, Bonne de Bourbon, wife of Amadeus VI of Savoy. Amadeus was a semi-mythical being who might have sat at the Round Table of King Arthur by the side of Launcelot of the Lake. He was generally known as the "Green Count" by reason of the colours he wore at a certain tournament. To judge from her portrait the Lady Bonne was small and slight, very pretty and very pert. She had large blue eyes and her fair hair was arranged in two heavy plaits, one on either side of her face. Her head-dress was a little flat cap that looked like a wreath, and her general aspect that of a very forward schoolgirl of fifteen. Although she was so small and although she wore her hair in plaits, she was a masterful lady. She managed her adventurous husband, her son, her daughter-in-law and everything and everybody about her.

[1] "Le Château de Ripaille," par Max Bruchet. Paris, 1907.

She had a love of the country. She hated walls and battlements, drawbridges and moats. She found the sombre castles in which she lived so many prisons, and thus it was that she came to the Forest of Ripaille, where she built a wooden house as a kind of hunting lodge. She began it in 1371, but did not enter into possession until six years later because she was short of money. As the funds of the family improved she added to Ripaille, for she was never still and never without a scheme in her head. In 1384 she made great additions. Being a good housewife, she built a spacious kitchen and provided a cellar worthy of it. Being of a religious mind, she erected a wooden chapel, and then—and this is very characteristic of her—put up a dovecot. Still she went on adding building after building, just as she wanted them, until the place must have looked like an encampment of huts and booths at a fair; for when she had finished Ripaille could accommodate 300 persons and 200 horses.

Now this fascinating and determined lady who hated walls yielded at last to the womanly weakness of vanity and—out of what must be called mere swagger—built a tower in front of the entrance. This was the beginning of the great Château of Ripaille.

In 1383 the Green Count died, and his son, Amadeus VII, reigned in his stead. Bonne the Imperious ruled over the new count as she had ruled over his father. She now came to be known—in spite of her little stature—as Madame la Grande to distinguish her from her daughter-in-law, the new countess, who went humbly by the name of Madame la Jeune. Bonne's son Amadeus, who was born in 1360, was called the "Red

RIPAILLE: THE ENTRANCE

Count," because in some friendly combats with English knights he had become so covered with British blood as to merit the title named. No hint is given as to the depth of tint he might have attained had the combats been unfriendly.

The Red Count was involved in what Bruchet calls "The Drama of Ripaille." This drama is a most curious medley; for it involves, as essential factors, a prince, a quack doctor, a wild boar and a suspected hair-wash. In the Forest of Lonnes, which lies between Thonon and Allinges, there was a devil-possessed wild boar which, by the violence of its disposition and the intemperance of its actions, became a terror to the country and, in after years, the subject of a popular romance.[1] The boar, having resisted both prayers and exorcisms, was approached by a body of hunters under the leadership of the Red Count. This was in the summer of 1391. The boar was killed by one of the escort, but the count, in the course of the hunt, was thrown against a tree and injured in the shoulder, according to one authority, in the leg according to another. He was taken to a farm in the forest called La Chavanne and was later carried to Ripaille.

It may be said, by the way, that the Forest of Lonnes, although much reduced in size, is still a glory of the country and that there is still a farmhouse at La Chavanne. It is a lonely old house covered with wistaria and made picturesque by an outside gallery of wood, and a great grey roof in which are very quaint dormer windows. Over one door is a quotation from Virgil and over the other some lines from Horace. The windows

[1] "Le Sanglier de la Forêt de Lonnes," par J. Replat. Annecy, 1840.

have little panes of glass and are flanked by antique sun-shutters. The house is surrounded by very old farm buildings and shaded by three great chestnut trees. The whole place is charming and as beautiful a picture of old Savoy as could be imagined.

Just before the time of the accident to Amadeus a doctor named Grandville had wormed his way into the Court. He was a charlatan of the ripest type and a liar of exceptional gifts. His cunning was so subtle and his blandishments so soft that even the Lady Bonne—clever as she was—was deceived and allowed him to prescribe for her, but happily without ill effect.

The count, when laid up by his injury, sent for Grandville. The smiling, insidious scoundrel came to Ripaille and brought with him so many medicines, ointments and electuaries that it needed two packhorses to carry them. Bruchet gives a list of these preparations, the very perusal of which is enough to promote an illness in the imaginative. Now when Grandville reached Ripaille and stepped, like a dancing master, into the sick room, unctuously rubbing his hands, the count made no complaint about his injury, but expressed his alarm at certain symptoms of old age that had beset him, viz. weakness, pallor and baldness. The count was then only thirty-one.

Grandville—with his sleeves tucked up—set to work on the bald head as the most tangible of the symptoms. He started with a wash which not only caused great pain to the prince, but burnt the hands of the barber who applied it. Not a hair responded. He then shaved the head in order that the next wash might penetrate to what are known to the laity as "the pores." This

wash smelt so horribly that both the patient and the barber had to hold their noses. Then came three other washes of varying degrees of offensiveness. Still there was no sign of a single hair. Then the expert rubbed the scalp with such vigour that it became red "*comme ensanglanté.*" Still no hair. Finally a very hot plaster was applied, to be worn four days and to be followed by other plasters and other washes. Still no hair ventured to show itself, although one would have thought that the treatment could produce a growth of hair on the head of a statue.

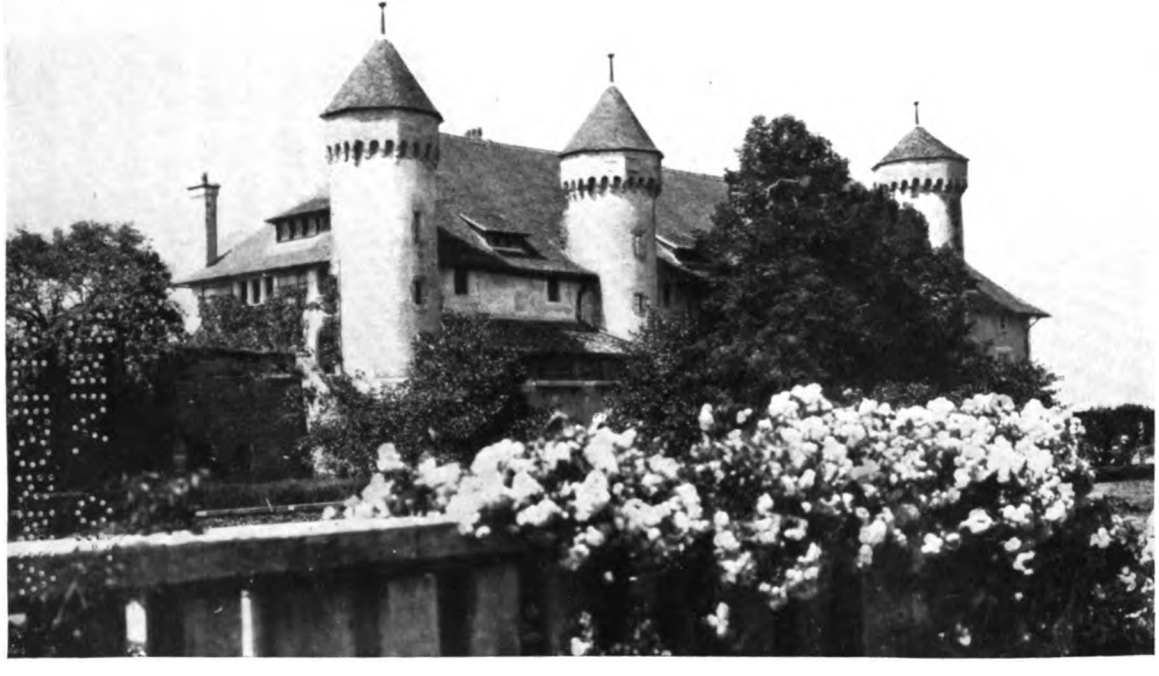
In addition to the local treatment Grandville gave the count medicines and pills. The pills were very large and black and horrible to the taste. However, the count took them. He only rebelled when he was offered a draught of "Extract of Unicorn," because his friends considered that preparations made from that animal were apt to be unreliable and too dangerous to be employed on a reigning prince.

The poor count, who had swallowed enough medicine to start a dispensary, became weaker and weaker; until, towards the end of October, it was evident that he was dying. Grandville was dismissed and the regular Court physicians called in. They declared that Amadeus had been poisoned by the quack; while certain courtiers were quick to add that the assassination was prompted by a noble named Othon de Grandson of Aubonne, who was hostile to the prince. Amid the hideous hubbub that followed, amid the clamour of charges and counter-charges, of venomous hints and bold lying, Amadeus, the Red Count, passed out of the world. The date of his death was November 2, 1891.

The party with the loudest voice declared that the prince had been poisoned, while the partisans of Grandson and indirectly of Grandville asserted that he had died of the effects of the accident at the boar hunt. From the ample documents furnished by M. Bruchet I am disposed to think that the death of the count was due to neither of these causes, but rather to a certain blood disorder prevalent at that age.

Grandville fled, was arrested but escaped, and was again captured. He died comfortably in prison in 1395. Grandson was imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon, and although subsequently released, his estates of Aubonne and of Coppet were confiscated. He was killed in a duel in 1397. Poor Bonne—the lady of the dovecot and the hair plaits, was—although quite innocent—involved in the political troubles that followed her son's death, and was obliged to leave Savoy. She died in exile in the year 1402.

Amadeus VIII, who succeeded his father, the Red Count, was a man of learning who was deeply devoted to religion. He entirely altered the aspect and character of Ripaille. In 1410 he established there a priory and chapel to St. Maurice and then set to work to build a castle for himself with fitting fortifications. Bonne's disorderly collection of buildings was swept away, all but her "great tower by the old gate." In the course of his building he added other round towers, making seven in all, constructed a deep moat, erected a drawbridge and laid out the great courtyard. This work he seems to have completed in 1434, in which year he founded at Ripaille the Order of St. Maurice. The first tower to the right of the entrance into the courtyard was reserved



THE CHÂTEAU OF RIPAILLE

for the doyen of the knights of St. Maurice. It was later known as the Tower of Pope Felix, for in 1439 Amadeus was elected Pope under the title of Felix V. This tower still stands.

Amadeus resigned the papacy and abdicated as duke in 1449,[1] was made Bishop of Geneva, and died in that city in 1451. He was buried at Ripaille. When the Bernese invaded Chablais in 1536 Ripaille was taken, the monastery was scattered, the tomb of the duke was broken up and the church turned into a stable. Later "a gentleman of Evian" collected the duke's bones and, taking them to Turin, deposited them, in 1576, in the Cathedral of St. Jean.

In 1589, when the Swiss again invaded Chablais, Thonon capitulated without a struggle, but Ripaille, with its garrison of 600 men, resisted. After a siege of only 48 hours the castle was taken, was looted with great thoroughness and was then set on fire. It burned for two days and was almost wholly destroyed, four only of the seven towers surviving. These four towers remain to this day. Later, when Ripaille once more came into the possession of Savoy, a Carthusian monastery was established here and appropriate buildings erected upon the site of the old ruins. In 1762 a church was added to the monastery. Ripaille remained with the Carthusians until the French Revolution in 1793, when the monastery was broken up and the buildings allowed to decay. In 1809 the château was purchased by Pierre Louis Dupas, the famous French general. He was a native of Evian—having been born in a house opposite the church—and lived at Ripaille until his death in

[1] He was the first count to assume the title of Duke of Savoy.

1828.[1] It remained in the family of Dupas until 1892, when it passed into the possession of the father of the present owners.

A picture of Ripaille as it appeared in 1866 is given in Wey's volume of lithographs.[2] It shows a mass of houses of various periods and of quite humble pretence. In the centre is the church of 1762, an ungainly building with a façade of pilasters in grey marble surmounted by the cross of Savoy. The four towers are to be seen, but the main building is entirely without interest or architectural character.

Thanks to the kindness of M. Paravicini I had an opportunity of seeing the château of to-day. It is a new building, sumptuously constructed and adorned, and is, with little doubt, the finest of the various châteaux that have been erected on this site. Certain it is that Ripaille has never stood in the midst of so glorious a garden. The four ancient towers of Amadeus, with their machicolations and their pointed roofs, are incorporated in the modern building. The church of 1762 has been pulled down. The moat has been turned into a rose garden and the great courtyard thrown open as it was in old days. Traces of the three towers that completed the total of seven are still visible, as are also some fragments of the ancient walls together with certain stone entries.

On the other side of the courtyard is the old monastery, a low building consisting of a central block and two wings. It is covered by a fine wide-stretching roof and evidently has been but little altered. It dates

[1] "Généraux Savoyards," par A. Anthonioz. Geneva, 1912.

[2] "La Haute Savoie," par Francis Wey. Paris, 1866.

from the end of the 16th century. In the outer wall, and at about three feet from the ground, certain cow-horns project at intervals from the masonry. They are supposed to have been worked in among the stones by the monks to keep off the devil, and, although they are now much decayed, they are no doubt still as efficient as they have ever been. There are some fine stone doorways in the monastery and some handsome old windows. The ancient corridors and the monks' cells are still retained.

The most charming feature of this building, however, is the monks' kitchen. It has been left untouched and is as solemn and as full of shadows as a great cave. The vaulted roof is black with the smoke of centuries. The enormous fireplace still parades the hook, the chain and the mighty pot which were essential parts of the Gargantuan cuisine of the time. The uncouth implements for preparing food by the hundredweight would make a modern dyspeptic shudder. On the walls hang mighty ladles and tongs and forks that would lift a carcass. The bins for flour, the tubs, the tankards for wine, the cruse for oil, the bellows, the meat-hooks, the heaps of logs and the font-like trough for the water suggest the kitchen of a giant and his hungry family; while the massive stone floor would bear the weight of a traction engine or of a cook of that tonnage.

The kitchen stands triumphantly for surfeit and plenty, for the mighty appetite and the fat of the land. What a picture it conjures up of the roaring supper table and the rows of burly figures on the benches, the heavy jowl and the tireless jaw, the slobbering mouth and the heaving Falstaffian paunch!

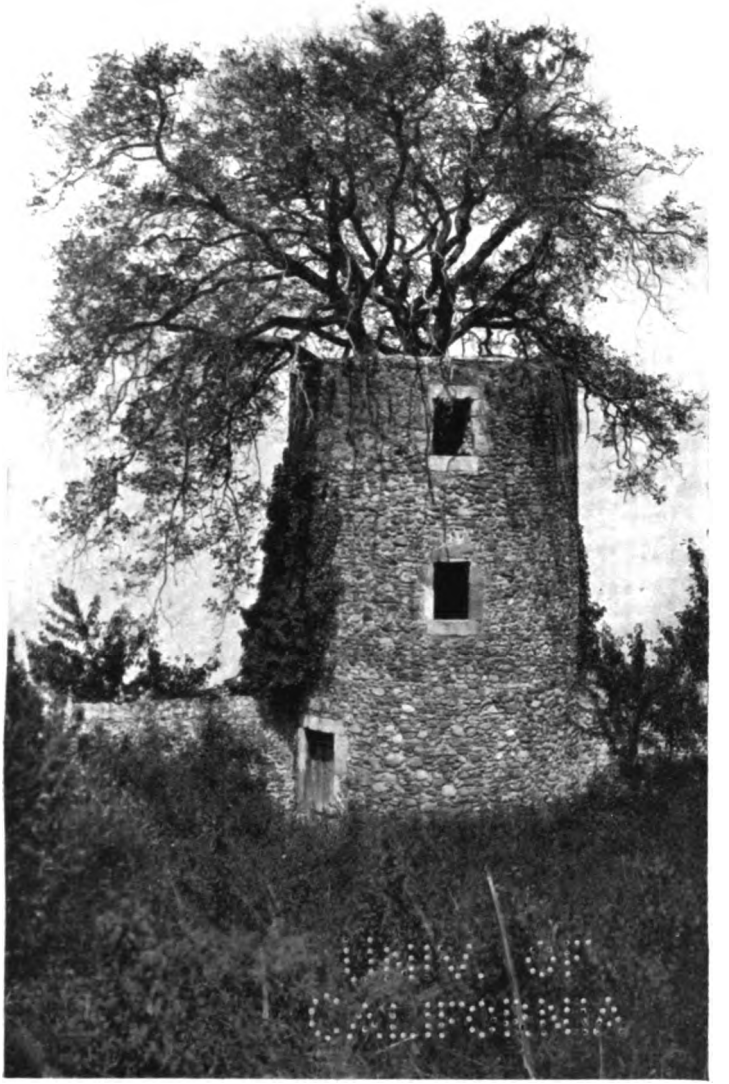
XI

TWO LEGENDS OF RIPAILLE

IN the park of Ripaille and by the water's edge is the Tour du Noyer. Being visible from the passing steamer and being of peculiar appearance it excites the interest of the lake-side tourist. It is an old round tower of two stories covered with ivy. The windows and the door are square. It was probably once a watch-tower as well as a pharos to guide ships round the cape. The tower is roofless, and the curious feature about it is that a great walnut tree grows from its interior and, mounting high above its summit, shades it like an umbrella. To this unusual circumstance the tower owes its name.

The Legend of the Nut Tower is as follows. A boatman was rowing a stranger across the Lake to Ripaille. The stranger—a very silent man—had with him a box which it was plain to see contained treasure. The boatman very naturally threw his fare into the Lake and drowned him. He landed chuckling on the beach and carried the box into the tower, where, after gloating over its contents for a while, he disposed himself to sleep. He was awakened from his dream of showers of gold by no less a person than the Devil.

The Devil informed him, as he sat shivering on the ground, that he himself was the stranger with the box



RIPAILLE: THE NUT TOWER

and that he had adopted this disguise in order to encourage the delightful crime of murder. He further informed his late boating companion that he proposed to kill him and to bury him in the tower and that from his wretched body would grow a walnut tree as from a seed. The boatman, who was no gardener, expressed little interest in this novel method of tree-culture and remained unconcerned when the Devil added a further botanical fact to the effect that for one hour once a year the nuts on the tree would be changed to diamonds. It is a matter of regret with local speculators that no one has as yet hit upon the exact hour when the jewellery is in bloom. My visit to the tower was equally ill-timed, for I certainly missed the advantageous moment.

Before the Devil proceeded to operate upon the boatman, who was dodging about in the tower like a rat in a pit, he became facetious and indulged in a pleasing pun upon the words *noyer* and *noyé*, which humour, no doubt, the boatman was too worried to enjoy.

In the courtyard of the château and opposite to the Tower of Felix V was a spot where, in winter, the snow was apt to collect and to linger after the rest of the yard had ceased to be white. It was a son of General Dupas who was especially impressed by the phenomenon which he had frequently noticed. There was a tradition that a well existed at this spot and that into it a young monk, who had committed a hideous crime, had been thrown alive. It was believed that on this account the snow was reluctant to melt, so that, once now and then, a pall of white might be laid over the body of the

unhappy man. There was evidence that a well existed in the courtyard in 1484. Excavations were made in 1908, and at the spot where the snow had always tarried the relics of a well were discovered. Among the mass of earth and stones and other débris that filled it was found the skeleton of a young man so disposed as to suggest that the body had been thrown headlong into the pit.

By the side of the bones were a pocket knife of a very ancient type, a chaplet of beads and, as a pendant to the same, a tiny human skull in ivory—a *memento mori*. These are precisely such things as are likely to be found in the pocket of a monk. I have seen these relics and cannot rid my mind of the belief that there is some truth in the tale they appear to tell.

— *B* —

FROM THE DRANSE TO THE RHONE

XII

A DESERTED SPA

THE most picturesque and most impressive part of the Lake shore is that which lies between the River Dranse and the Rhone. After the Dranse and its melancholy flat are passed the coastline becomes gradually higher and higher, forming a huge green bank some nine miles long which, before it ends, attains at Thollon to no less than 1,800 feet above the level of the Lake. Looked at from below this heaving slope is like the back of a great green wave as it would appear to a swimmer in the trough behind it. It seems as if, at its summit, it must be curling over to break at the foot of the mountains which are still some miles away. These mountains are dominated by the grey peak of Dent d'Oche, which, until the summer comes, is covered with snow.

The bank is brilliant with every shade of green, from the holly-green of the thicket of firs to the lettuce-green of the rising corn, a bank of meadows and woods, of cherry orchards and of chestnut groves, with, here and there, a hamlet with its pointed spire and, here and there, a white-walled villa, a garden of many colours, or the brown roofs of an ancient farm. About Thollon,

above Meillerie, the bank and the mountains meet, and from Meillerie eastwards the shore of the Lake is one gigantic precipice, cleft, more than once, from summit to foot by a fierce ravine and, in the rest of its length, a rampart half pine-forest and half cliff. At the end of the Lake it forms a flank of that stupendous portal through which the Rhone sweeps out into the open.

The first place met with, after the Dranse is crossed, is the village of **Amphion.** It is a shy, old-fashioned hamlet lying curled up at the foot of a hill. It is some way from the shore and the hustling high road. Since that road was made and since the steamers came Amphion would appear to have drawn a cloak over its head and to have dropped out of the scheme of things. It is a sun-browned place with an unassuming prettiness of its own and has probably changed but little during the last two hundred years. By the pier and at some distance from the old village is the modern Amphion, where are the café, the restaurant and the postcard shop without which the tourist would find the world a place devoid of purpose.

About a mile from Amphion along the Evian road is a spring. It is not easy to find and, when found, is not difficult to forget, and yet there was a time when its waters were the most famous in Savoy, a time when the Spa of Amphion was the resort of the "smart set" of the day and of all who (well or ill) wished to be regarded as people of quality. This was long before the waters of Evian were discovered. Now the Amphion spring is about three miles from Thonon and one and a half miles from Evian, and as there was no accommodation for visitors at Amphion village those who would

take the waters had to stay at one or other of the towns named. Evian being the nearer was the better patronized.

It was in the 18th century that the spa at Amphion reached the summit of its glory. It was then imperative that all those who claimed to be "in society" should repair once a year to Amphion. The Amphion spring is chalybeate, and its medicinal value depends—as does the value of other spa waters—largely upon the faith of the visitor, the dictates of fashion and the docility of the doctor.

A very curious little book was written in 1697 on the subject of the Amphion spring.[1] It is a cheerful, chatty and discursive work enlivened with verses. It professes to give an analysis of the water and a report as to its healing powers; but it wanders off into a history of Chablais from the days of the Romans and an account of Evian from its very infancy. The analysis is not profound and is, indeed, almost pathetic in its innocence. It was accomplished by dropping powdered oak-apples into the water and noting the change of colour and in emphasizing the fact that the addition of certain potent chemicals caused no "*fermentation.*"

From the physician's report it appears that the spring had a wide range of usefulness. It could purify the blood—whatever that may mean—it could cure boils and asthma, sciatica and sleeplessness, gout and goitre, as well as *tremblements* and *herezipere.* It also seems to have been a remedy for laziness. For example, *le sieur* Pomel of Evian, who for twenty years could not go out of the town except on a horse, regained the use of his feet after drinking the water for fifteen days. Then,

[1] "Mercure Acatique," par Père Bernard, Gardien d'Evian, 1697.

again, a lady of Margensel who had long been unable to go to church managed to walk there after eighteen days of water drinking. Her case was evidently a little more obstinate than that of *sieur* Pomel. Some of the cures were very quick. Thus Michel Bassay, who had been blind for five years, recovered his sight in fifteen days. A woman of Divonne, aged 80, who had been paralysed for nearly eighteen years, in all but her tongue and her arms, was able to walk in the regulation fortnight. A little undue, and possibly unkind, emphasis is laid upon the fact that her tongue was never paralysed during this trying illness.

Amphion spa in the season was a place of great activity and display and was thronged by a gaily-dressed and pleasure-seeking company. There was a regular service of public vehicles from Thonon, on the one side, and from Evian on the other. Crowds came in private carriages; a great number in boats, while those who considered a walk of a mile and a half to be part of the "cure" gave animation to the Evian road with their bright frocks and many-tinted parasols and their lively chatter. The pump-room was by the beach. It was a low building with a colonnade of white pillars. On the Lake side was a terrace and on the land side a lawn. There now stands in its place a modern hotel with the façade of which, however, the old white colonnade is blended.

An ancient print shows the spa as it was in the days of its triumph. The garden is buzzing with men and women dressed in the latest fashion of the time. They walk to and fro, simper and bow, take off their hats, kiss finger tips, spread themselves upon benches or gossip together in groups, snuff-box in hand. In the road is

AMPHION

AMPHION: THE DESERTED SPA

a crowd of carriages and coaches, of cabriolets and gigs, together with a lounging company of coachmen and footmen, of postilions and maids. For colour and vivacity it may be a parade in Bath, in the days of Beau Nash.

The spa is now without honour even in its own country. An obscure lane, overgrown with weeds, slinks down to the water's edge. There, under the shadow of a great chestnut tree, are the once famous spring and its pavilion. The pavilion is a small octagonal building of red brick and plaster with eight round arches. It has a pointed roof covered with gold-green moss. Within two streams of water from metal pipes drop, with a pretty tinkle, into a stone basin. Thence the water overflows on to the ground and, escaping by the doorway, runs down to the beach, staining the pebbles as it goes with the tint of rust.

On the wall over the spring are inscribed these words —*Aquæ Meæ Prosunt Homnibus Infirmis Omnium Nationum.*[1] It will be noticed that the initial letters spell the word "Amphion." The pavilion was built by Victor Amadeus II, he whose history is recorded in Chapter xv.

The poor little pavilion, forgotten by the world, is a picture of utter desolation and neglect. But for the babble of its waters, which has never ceased, night or day, for over two hundred years, it is as still as an empty chapel, and yet there was a time when there fluttered around it a throng as brightly coloured as a cloud of butterflies and when white arms and jewelled hands would be thrust through its arches to receive a cup of the water that was to cure all ills.

[1] My waters are for the good of the sick of all nations.

XIII

EVIAN

EVIAN is one of the most popular towns on the Lake. It is a pretty place, quiet and old-fashioned; its waters and baths have a high repute; its hotels are among the best in France, and its summer climate is perfect. Its position on the Lake makes it a convenient centre for visitors, while among its greatest attractions is the enchanting country with which it is surrounded.

Evian is small and has been little spoiled by its popularity, which it accepts with composure. It consists of one narrow main street, sundry lanes and a market square. By the Lake promenade are the Etablissement des Bains and the Casino, while behind the town on the slope of the hill are the great hotels and the fashionable villas. Here is a simple old country town with a rustic market-place, where butter and eggs are sold, surrounded by very advanced buildings of great magnificence, and here is a High Street where the limousine from Paris, with its liveried servants, is held up by a primitive wagon drawn by two oxen and guided by a man of the 17th century. The association is as anomalous as would be the picture of a peasant in homespun, with a rake on his shoulder, sitting in a salon surrounded by a gorgeously apparelled company.

Evian

Evian is a "season place," and in the height of the summer is crowded, is agreeably restless and very smart. The Rue Nationale becomes then a miniature Bond Street, for there are shops from Paris and Aix and Nice to dazzle the eye. As the pavement is so narrow that it will only admit of one person at a time, the *baigneurs* walk in the road. Beneath the avenue of clipped plane trees which shade the promenade there is always a rustling company, bright with all the colours of the setting sun.

When the season is over Evian becomes once again a drowsy, self-absorbed provincial town. The High Street may be absolutely deserted from end to end. The hotels are closed and the brilliant shops are shuttered up. The steamboats cease to call, while the cabs, the motors, the charabancs and the pleasure boats vanish as if by the stroke of a magician. The place becomes suddenly empty, suddenly quiet, like a ballroom awed by a sudden death. There is nothing to recall the gala days but the flaming posters still hot on the walls, while down the desolate High Street a yoke of oxen can lounge with an air of contemptuous boredom.

Evian is a venerable town, for it figures in the mediæval wars and, even before those days, there was some kind of Roman settlement in the place. Its history is neither distinctive nor particularly interesting, since it differs so little from that of other ancient towns of its kind. It was periodically besieged. It was periodically pillaged. It was on occasion burnt down and on occasion decimated by the plague. It received benefactions from this gracious lady or that great lord, was visited by princes and witnessed in its streets, from time to time,

scenes of riot and brawling when the people, pouring out of the taverns, clamoured for more liberty or the redress of wrong. If particular names and dates are supplied a history such as this would provide the salient features in the story of a long series of ancient towns.[1]

In its young days Evian must have been very picturesque. It was surrounded by a wall and a moat and was entered by five gates. In the circuit of the wall were twelve towers, very lofty and defiant. There were two churches, two great convents and a château. A stream, La Gruz, ran through the centre of the town, dividing it into two parts and incidentally turning a mill-wheel on its way. To the west of the stream was the parish or *bourg* of St. Mary, with its church still standing; while to the east was the *bourg* of La Touvière, with its church of St. Catherine. This church, which stood on the spot now occupied by the Buvette Cachat, was dismantled in the Revolution and later fell into ruins.[2]

The walls and fortifications were built by Amadeus V in 1322. The chief towers belonged to certain strongholds. The more ancient of these was the castle of Peter of Savoy, built in 1287. It had four towers, and occupied the site of the present Hôtel de France on the south side of the main street. It is described in old books as the *Château du Souverain* and is depicted as being in a more or less ruinous condition. The second castle—known as the Gribaldi Château—was built in

[1] A History of the Town by Noble François Prevost, written in 1623, and reproduced in *Tome* v. of the "Mémoires de l'Académie Chablaisienne," 1891; also "Les Archives d'Evian avant 1790," par C. A. Bouchet.

[2] "Au Pays Eviannais," par Alexis Bachellerie. Evian, 1909.

1569, and stood where is now the modern Hôtel de Ville.[1]

Of the encircling wall and its five gates no trace remains; but of the round towers four are still to be seen. They have lost in stature and in dignity, have ceased to be menacing or martial and have become tamely domesticated as parts of modest dwellings. The guard-room has possibly become a fowl-house and the turret of the sentry a bedroom for a child. Two stand timidly behind the Hôtel de Ville, another is hidden by the Hôtel de France, while a fourth, very shrunken by the weight of years, clings to the spot where was once the Thonon Gate. Here, like a blind halberdier, it seems to be still watching the western road.

The two convents—much modernized—occupy their ancient sites. The Convent of St. Claire, on the west, is close to the parish church; while that of the Cordeliers (now the Pensionnat St. Joseph) is on the east of the town, where its ancient walled garden confronts the Tourists' Office and the holiday-makers' pier.

The church of St. Mary is the predominant feature of Evian and its most distinguished building. It dates from the 13th and 14th centuries. The tower is magnificent, being unusually lofty and of great size. It has huge belfry windows with round arches, and is surmounted by a balustrade and a glittering steeple which was erected in 1793 in place of an older structure which had been destroyed. At the foot of the tower is an early Gothic window. Compared to the tower, the church is mean. It has a nave and two aisles, the vaulted

[1] "Historic Studies in Vaud, Berne, and Savoy," by Meredith Read. Vol. 2, page 7. London, 1897.

roofs of which are very cunningly painted to represent carved stone. By the side of the chancel is the little Chapel of Notre-Dame de Grâces. Above its altar are figures of the Virgin and Child carved in wood and brightly painted. The work bears the date 1498. Both figures are nearly life size and, although a little archaic, are very charming. It will be noticed that the infant Christ holds in His hand a bird with a black head.

This carving has a curious history. Louise, daughter of Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, married Hugues de Châlons, the last Lord of Orbe. Being left a widow at the age of 80, she entered the convent of the Clarisses at Orbe.[1] Her novitiate ended in June, 1498. To commemorate that event she presented to the convent the figure of the Madonna above described. The small bird with the black head, held in the hand of the infant Christ, represents herself. She died in 1508. In 1554 the nuns were driven from Orbe and sought refuge at Evian. They carried the figure of the Madonna with them. They set sail from Ouchy on March 20th, 1555, in favourable weather. Midway across the Lake they were overtaken by a storm and the ship was nearly lost. To lighten the vessel some of the cargo was thrown overboard, and among the articles cast away in the confusion was the sacred image. The nuns landed safely at Evian as the sun died down.

That same day, in the evening, a fisherman of Meillerie noticed a shining object on the lake. He approached it and saw to his amazement the face of the Madonna—very vivid and very lifelike—appearing above

[1] Orbe is in Vaud, between Lausanne and the Lake of Neuchâtel. The convent is now an inn.

EVIAN

EVIAN: ONE OF THE TOWERS

the surface of the deep. Around the face was a halo of gold over which the water rippled. What appeared in the dim light to be a miraculous vision proved to be the figure from the convent at Orbe. It was recovered and restored to the nuns, who, in gratitude for their deliverance, gave it to the church at Evian, in the little chapel of which it has remained for, now, over 800 years.[1]

The château at Evian, generally spoken of as the de Blonay Castle, occupied the site upon which the present Casino stands. It appears in a print of 1725 as a square block of uninteresting and featureless buildings with a fine garden reaching down to the edge of the Lake.[2] It was originally the Castle of Grillie which in 1474 belonged to the Bonivards, of which family the Prisoner of Chillon was a member. In 1565 it was sold to Jacques Dunant, and finally came to the de Blonays in 1676.[3] The de Blonays occupied the château for 200 years until 1878, when it became the property of the town of Evian under the will of Ennemond de Blonay, the last of this branch of the family. It was pulled down and the Casino built in its place.

There was another château at Evian, the Château de Fonbonne. It was founded in the 14th century by Amadeus V and was, for a time, an occasional residence of the Counts of Savoy. It became later the house of Baron de Montfaucon and, in turn, of other nobles. Towards the end of the 16th century it was more or less completely destroyed by the Bernese and the French.

[1] "Notre-Dame de Grâces." Anon. Evian, 1893.

[2] "Groot Stedeboek van Piemont en van Savoye." The Hague, 1725.

[3] Read, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, page 7.

It appears in old drawings as a large massive house with a tower, enclosed within high walls. The present building is modern and has been converted into an hotel.

Conspicuous in Evian as in other Lake towns is the Jardin Anglais. It is a little thicket of trees by the water's edge intersected by paths. Why this pleasant spot is called "the English Garden" is unknown, for certainly no garden in England could possibly have inspired it. Indeed, if introduced into England it would assuredly be called "the Foreign Garden" on account of its unfamiliar appearance.

The now far-famed waters of Evian were discovered in 1790, and within a few years—as was inevitable—the town became a spa and changed its name from Evian to Evian les Bains. The acquiring of this title and dignity was attended by some loss of charm; for Evian, the cheery, Lake-side town, where people thronged to take the waters of Amphion, became gravely altered when it had waters of its own. Before the springs were discovered it was as rural and as artless a place as Coppet. It had neither harbour nor pier. Those who came by boat landed on the beach. There was no promenade with its stiff row of trees like a file of drilled men. Gardens came down to the water's edge. From the garden steps women could dip their buckets in the Lake and over the wall the boys could fish. There were then still traces of the fortifications and the gates and even of the moat. The de Blonay château stood by the church, while in the High Street were many old buildings, none the less picturesque because they were lapsing into ruin.

Now scarcely an ancient house remains. One, however, is to be noted in the Rue de l'Eglise (No. 1). It

was the town house of some noble family. The entry has a shouldered arch, and it and the large mullioned windows speak regretfully of better days. There is a fine, masterful-looking old house on the south side of the main street near the site of the Thonon Gate. As it is shown in old prints, so—with but little change—does it appear now. This was the great inn, the *Cheval Blanc*, which was, no doubt, a bustling place during the Amphion season. According to Read the inn was the scene of a quarrel that, just before the French Revolution, caused much stir in the town. It concerned a Dunant (one of the family who once owned the Château of Evian) and a physician. The physician, forgetful of the suave manners of his profession, kicked his slipper into the face of the gentleman named. This very marked expression of contempt led to a duel, which was fought out at the back of the inn, in a place called "behind the moat." Dunant was killed, and the practitioner, who had so suddenly exchanged the lancet for the sword, was compelled to flee, for there was an impression abroad that he had provoked the duel in order that he might kill Dunant.

As to the aspect of the natives of Evian there have been curious differences of opinion. Shelley, writing in 1816,[1] remarks "the appearance of the inhabitants of Evian is more wretched, diseased and poor than I ever recollect to have seen"; whereas Wey, writing in 1866, speaks of the beauty of the young women of Evian and the charm of their little round bonnets. It is possible that when Shelley landed he met the inmates of the

[1] "History of a Six Weeks' Tour." London, 1817.

[2] "La Haute Savoie," par Francis Wey. Paris, 1866.

hospital taking the air as a measure of treatment, and mistook them for the normal inhabitants, since ruddier and more stalwart folk than the people of Evian could not well be found. As for the little round bonnets, I am afraid they have gone, and possibly the pretty faces have faded with them. Now and then one meets with an aged woman wearing one of these coquettish round caps, and it would be kindly to assume that fifty-five years ago, when Wey visited Evian, the wrinkled face was one of those he thought so comely.

XIV

THE FÊTE-DIEU

THE people of Evian are to be seen at their best on the occasion of the Fête-Dieu, which is held on the Sunday after Corpus Christi, that is to say about the beginning of June. The whole street is then lined on either side with young fir trees, which would be Christmas trees to English eyes. They give to the road the aspect of a way through a wood. On the pavement in front of every house are masses of flowers, and it is to be noted that they are wild flowers. Some are in baskets, some in pots, some are in untidy bundles just as the children picked them. Here and there the threshold is strewn with flower petals. Here and there a little table, covered with a white cloth, is placed before the house, and on it stands a vase of wild flowers; or, failing a table, there will be a chair. Even the poorest cottage makes some display, if only it be a bunch of gentian in a jam-pot or in a tin covered with white paper. There are no tawdry artificial decorations. Young trees from the mountain-side and blossoms from the meadow alone grace the Fête-Dieu.

At either end of the town—in the market-place, on the one hand, and beyond the convent on the other—an elaborate altar is erected. A religious procession is formed which visits in turn the two altars. In the main

street, through which the procession moves, certain religious groups are posed to represent Scripture characters. The tableaux are arranged and the holy people are personified by the humbler folk of the town. The realization of each character is founded upon some familiar picture or statue in a church and is carried out with pious simplicity. The people themselves make the garments and fashion the accessories, the haloes, the wings, the wigs, the beards and the different sacred emblems.

In the Fête-Dieu of 1921 the tableaux were as follows. In a space before a café, made available by clearing away the round tables and the chairs, was a group composed of the Virgin Mary, Christ, St. Peter, John the Baptist and other saints. It was quite impressive because it was so natural. The Madonna was a very pretty, sad-faced woman who made an adorable figure and was regarded by the passers-by with a reverence that dispelled mere curiosity. St. Peter, with his key, lost some dignity by nodding to his friends in the street. He had, moreover, a jovial face which no subtlety could make serious. John the Baptist, on the other hand, was a convincing figure. He really looked as if he cried in the wilderness and as if "his meat was locusts and wild honey," for he was so very lean. The baby in the cradle was not a success. He would put his toes in his mouth, and when rebuked became violent. He was bribed to be quiet by a gift of flowers; but he hurled them from him with what, in a grown-up man, would have been, without doubt, regrettable language.

Another group, by the corner of a lane, was composed of women at a well. A third group in the street

EVIAN CHURCH

was made up of angels in blue. They were on a rough pedestal covered with brown paper to resemble rock. They were young girls, and they formed an exceedingly effective picture. The angel on the summit of the rock had been drilled to keep her hands crossed over her chest and her eyes turned to heaven. The hands remained unmoved, but when the schoolgirls came by in the procession the eyes faltered and drooped gently to the street, for I am sure that the school was her school.

At the foot of this group of angels was a number of very tiny cherubim with bare arms and legs and with a great scarcity of clothing. They had little wings which would not have lifted a kitten, and they held aloft flowers in their very chubby hands. After a while, however, the hands dropped and the flowers were forgotten. Some sat down, some clung to the robes of grown-up angels, while one curled herself up, to the damage of her wings, and putting her thumb in her mouth composed herself to rest. Before the procession came by the parts they had to play had left their thoughts, and the tableau—so far as they were concerned—consisted of a number of half-naked cherubim tumbling about on the ground in drowsy disorder.

As a religious display the Fête-Dieu at Evian is most impressive. It is carried out with solemnity and reverence. It is evidently an expression of frank and genuine devotion and is, above all, made admirable by its simplicity, for it is a pageant of the religion of a child.

XV

VICTOR AMADEUS II AND EVIAN

ON a certain May morning in 1684 the village of Les Echelles was the scene of a sudden and breathless excitement. A very distinguished company had arrived by the Lyons road and had drawn up, with much commotion, at the inn. It was a large party of lords and ladies, all gorgeously dressed and attended by a retinue of servants of no ordinary type. It was a curious party, inasmuch as the most important person in the cavalcade was a small girl of fifteen, who was the object of great attention. The villagers crowded round the inn to get a peep at her. She was a vivacious little maid with a smiling face and roguish eyes. Her head was a mass of curls held in place by bands of silver beads. Her dress was that of a woman of thirty, for her gown was long enough to hide her feet, while the stomacher, stiff and heavily embroidered, reached to a point below her waist.[1]

The arrival of travellers was no uncommon thing, because the town was not only on the high road between Paris and Chambéry, but it stood on the frontier that divided the two great states of France and Savoy.

The party that had so fluttered the town took breakfast in an upper room of the inn, the windows of which

[1] "The Romance of Savoy," by the Marchesa Vitelleschi 2 Vols. London, 1905.

looked out upon the street. As it was the month of May there is little doubt that the windows were thrown open. The meal had not been long in progress when the sound of drums and fifes was heard in the direction of the Chambéry road. The crowd before the inn became excited and commenced to cheer and to wave their caps.

The little lady at the head of the table immediately jumped up, in spite of the anxious protests of her friends, and rushed to the window. She saw coming down the street a young man of eighteen, superbly clad and very pleasant to look upon. He was riding at the head of a gallant company of archers and musketeers whose tramp could be heard above the rattle of the drums. The little lady scanned the young man very intently, and then, heedless of the upraised hands and horrified looks of all at the table, rushed out of the room and down the stairs into the street, where she leaped into the arms of the gorgeous lad, who had just then halted at the tavern door.

The lords and ladies, looking down from the windows, were shocked and scandalized by this spectacle, but the crowd approved of it, for they raised a shout that made the horses rear, and that shout they repeated with greater fervour when the youth lifted the lady to his saddle and kissed her.

The boy and girl were husband and wife. They had been married three weeks, but they had never met before nor had they even seen one another; for they had been married by proxy. The youth was Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy; the girl was Anna Maria, the granddaughter of Charles the First of England.

It had been arranged that the meeting of the two

at the frontier should be conducted with elaborate etiquette. Indeed the ceremony of the meeting had been rehearsed over and over again; but when the moment came little Anna Maria with the curly head could not restrain her curiosity, for she *must* see what her husband was like, and when she saw him she could not restrain the impulse of her heart, for she felt she *must* kiss him. And so the courtly ceremonial that had been so laboriously planned came to nothing; for no spectacle can be less ceremonious than that of a girl jumping into the arms of a becoming youth.

After the necessary presentations had been made the bride and bridegroom, with their suite, started for Chambéry. The duchess was carried in a Sedan chair as the road was rough, while the duke rode by her side. Now and again the restless lady would get out of the chair, and then the two would walk together, talking shyly with many pauses, or would linger behind to pick flowers while the cavalcade moved on.

When they reached Chambéry it was almost dark, but the streets were crowded and ablaze with the waving light of a hundred torches; volleys of guns were fired from the castle, while there was not a window that was not illuminated and fluttering with flags. The boy and girl made their way through a cheering mob of loyal folk to Sainte Chapelle to receive the archbishop's blessing. After the Benediction the two walked alone to the gate of the palace, he leading her by the hand.

To realize to its full the importance of the new duchess it is necessary to mention that when Queen Anne died, in 1714, Lord Mar assured the Government of Savoy that if any untoward event happened to the

Chevalier de St. Georges the Stuart party and the troops under their command had received orders to proclaim Anna Maria Queen of England.[1]

The duke and duchess became somewhat intimately associated with Evian, for the family often repaired there in order to take the waters of Amphion. During their visits they resided at the Château de Blonay in Evian, near by the church of St. Mary. It was in the church of St. Mary that Victor Amadeus became involved in the dramatic scene that marked his meeting with the emotional Madame de Warens, as is detailed in Chapter XXXII, and it was with Evian that the closing tragedy of his own eventful life was concerned (page 104). It was he, too, who built the pavilion over the spring at Amphion and made that little spa, for a while, the most fashionable in Savoy and incidentally filled Evian with persons of quality (page 87).

Anna Maria proved herself to be—in the course of years—a very admirable woman, wise, amiable and above reproach, a perfect wife as well as a noble and dignified princess. She died in 1728.

After her death the House of Savoy, that she had so gallantly helped to maintain, fell for the moment into grave disorder. The duke, although only sixty-two, had become a prematurely old man, feeble in health and worn out by the hardships of his many campaigns. He fell an easy prey to a certain scheming countess who was resolved to become the Duchess of Savoy. The two were secretly married in the duke's study at Turin in the presence only of a clerk and a valet. This was two years after the death of Anna Maria.

[1] "Marchesa Vitelleschi," *op. cit.*

A month after his second marriage the duke abdicated in favour of his only son Charles Emmanuel. He took this step without the knowledge of his ambitious and masterful wife. He had a longing to return to Chambéry, and to Chambéry he went for the second time as a bridegroom. He arrived just after dusk, as in the happy year when he came as a lad, and went direct to Sainte Chapelle, precisely as he had done forty-six years before. But there was now no cheering crowd in the street, no flare of torches, no salvoes of artillery and, most poignant of all, no bride to lead by the hand. He came alone; no one met him; no one knew of his return; he made his way to the chapel through deserted streets; he entered and prayed alone, and alone he walked from the chapel to the palace gate. He was acting over again the sunniest moment of his life, but it was under a cloud of brooding tragedy and assumed the form of a self-tormenting penance.

The final act of the drama opened at Evian. The new duke, Charles Emmanuel, had gone there to take the waters. While at Evian he was made aware of the astounding news that his father, under the influence of his pernicious wife, had revoked his act of abdication and was on his way to Turin to resume the throne. The young duke left Evian as the panting messenger finished his tale and went post haste to Turin. His father and he arrived there within a few hours of one another. The turmoil, the confusion, the angry interviews, the plots and counter-plots that followed may be imagined.

In the end—and the end was sad enough—the ill-advised Charles Emmanuel gave the order for his father's arrest, and the feeble, shattered old duke was pulled

from his bed at two in the morning and carried by force to Rivoli, where he was kept a close prisoner. Here he died some twelve months later, just forty-eight years after the meeting with the little duchess on that wonderful morning at Les Echelles.

The second wife—the scheming lady who dragged a helpless man to ruin to serve her own ends—lived in comfort to the age of ninety.

XVI

THE REAL COUNTRY

TO the dweller in towns there is a distinction between the country and the "real country." With the indiscriminate country he is prepared to be, in some way, satisfied, simply because it is not the town; but when the weariness of the city is heavy upon him it is for the real country that he longs. It means to him a quiet place, green and dappled with the sun, that is far behind the battle line of life with its clamour of arms and its crush of men. It means a return, in spirit at least, to the pastoral age of the world where, in the place of the factory with its trail of smoke, are the uplands and the sheep.

It needs but little to arouse this longing for the natural and the unspoiled. It may be a glimpse of blue sky above the trench-like walls of the street, or a bunch of primroses in a flower-seller's basket, or so primitive a figure as a man with a scythe in a public park.

The country for some twenty miles round a great city like London brings little contentment. It is contaminated by the herding of men and the trample of their restless feet. Highways traverse it in unfeeling lines; the villages have lost their simplicity and have become pinchbeck towns; the hedges are emaciated and grey with dust; the common is as bare as a worn-out

HOW VINES ARE GROWN IN SAVOY

carpet, and shreds of advertisements hang, like bits of skin, from the meadow fence.

Go further afield, even travel for a day, and the real country is still hard to find. There are open downs, it is true, wide heaths, footpaths by the cliff, leafy lanes and the banks of streams, but the traces of man and his doings are not readily escaped, for even in the remotest glen the paper bag and broken bottle of the picnic party will be come upon.

It is but little exaggeration to say that there is no "real country" in England. Tramp from the great centre until you come to the sea and the country is still suburban. The land is trim. It has lost its *naïveté* and has become artificial. It is parcelled out like a surveyor's plan, ruled and lined like an allotment garden. The heart of the country is shut away and is guarded as shrewdly as the cloister of a nun. On all sides there are hedges and railings and barbed wire. Everything is enclosed in a pen. The orchard can be seen over a wall bristling with broken glass, while the wood is railed about and proclaims upon every side that the trespasser will be prosecuted. In England, indeed, the way of the trespasser is hard.

In Savoy, on the other hand, the real country is to be found, and nowhere more generously than by the south shores of the Lake. There, at least, it is not far to seek, for it comes, in all its artlessness, to the very walls of the town. The country itself is luxuriant. It is a land "flowing with milk and honey." It is, moreover, beautiful in its landscape, in its valleys and hills, its vast woods, its slopes green with trees, its river gorges and its flower-bedecked meadows.

Around Evian it is possibly at its best. Here is the heart of the country open and making welcome. There are no hedges, no gates, no fences. The stranger may wander where he will. There are highways and mule tracks, but the common means of going to and fro is by the footpath, a footpath as narrow as an Indian trail. It leads through clover fields and fields of corn, through vineyards and through meadows knee-deep in grass. It makes its way unhindered across the apple orchard and the cherry grove, for there is no confining wall. The blossoms drop on the head of the passer-by, the apples fall at his feet.

The path leads through gardens with as much assurance as if the garden were one's own. It traverses a wood where, by many devious ways, it may wander for miles. It passes through the farmyard and among all its intimate medley of homely things, by the water trough made from the trunk of a tree, the stack of winter wood, the plough, the wine barrels, the lantern hanging from a nail, the stepping-stones across the brook. The house itself is one of the joys of the open path. It will be of brown wood covered often by clematis or wistaria. Under the great eaves runs a long gallery made bright by a few scarlet geraniums and reached by an outside stair. Beneath are the cow-house, the pen for fowls and the shed where hang the yokes for the oxen, the haymakers' tools, the scythes, the baskets for the grapes.

He who follows the path will see, as the year moves on, every phase of the life of the country, and see it with a freedom and intimacy that he shares with the countryman himself. He will see the ploughing of the land

with oxen, the haymaking, the cherry and the apple harvest, the gathering of the chestnuts, the making of the cyder, the grape harvest and the pruning of the vine. This open-heartedness of the country, this admission of the stranger into its familiar life, is readily explained. The land is possessed by small proprietors who represent as fine, honest and industrious a people as the world can boast of. There are no flocks and herds to be penned in fields. The little company of sheep is in charge of a languid boy who follows them about all day, whistling as he goes. The cow is conducted to its pasture by an aged woman or a girl who will knit as she shuffles along with the cow-rope round her arm. Of the man-hating bull that may make the open field a place of terror there is no evidence.

Since there are no cattle to confine and since the orchard-robber is unknown, hedges and fences are not needed. The wood is free for all to wander in because game preserving and its inevitable restraints are not observed in this corner of France. More than this, a respect for the fields and for the bounty of the land is almost a religion with these simple folk. It is, indeed, an idyllic country but little removed from that imagined land where shepherds played upon their pipes, where fauns and dryads gambolled in the glen and where it was a fitting thing "to sport with Amaryllis in the shade."

The country is a paradise for birds, and I have happened upon no place where more singing birds are to be heard than around Evian. It is unusual to meet in a vast city-like hotel with people who mildly grumble that their sleep has been disturbed by nightingales, but such

are to be met with here. In a small untidy museum at Thonon is a collection of the birds that are to be found on or about the Lake. The collection is astonishing and claims to be complete. While it includes birds common to Great Britain it embraces many that are not seen in that island.

The glory of the flowers along the shores of the Lake adds another enchantment to the country. Before the hay is cut there is as brilliant a display of colour as will be found in any Alpine meadow. There are fields purple with meadow sage, yellow with the glorious globe-flower, pink with sainfoin or blue with campanulas. There are slopes of nodding columbines and banks so covered with the small gentian as to seem to be enamelled with lapis lazuli. Anemones of all tints, forget-me-nots in huge masses, the mountain flax, the rock rose, the pansy, the wild strawberry and the wood geranium are among the common flowers to be found in this delectable wild garden. There are, besides, so many blossoms which are unfamiliar that the idler may be busy, if only he will ramble about with curiosity in his mind and a copy of Hulme in his pocket.[1]

Lovers of Alpine flowers will understand the desire that moved the closing moments in the life of Edmond Boissier, the famous botanist. As he lay dying he was asked if there was anything he wished. "Yes," he said, "there is one thing I wish, to hold in my hand for the last time a sprig of Alpine campanula." So it came about that, as the shadows deepened and the world grew dark, there stood clear before his eyes, in the last speck of light that lingered, the lone figure of the bell-flower.

[1] "Familiar Swiss Flowers." By F. E. Hulme. London, 1908.

XVII

HOW MARIE AIMÉE MET SEVEN ANGELS IN THE GUISE OF MENDICANTS

IN the kindly country that lies between Evian and St. Paul there is a little shy lane which seems to beckon the stranger to follow it. It leads, by enticing ways, to the border of a wood, to a lonely place disturbed only by the songs of birds and the babble of a stream. In this solitude will be found a small white shrine enclosed by a railing. On the surface of a stone panel, below a figure of the Virgin, are engraved these lines:

"*Here Marie Aimée de Blonay*
Met Seven Angels in the guise of Mendicants."

There is nothing more; no date, no emblem, no sign that can add even a hint to the simple statement. Those who come upon this shrine will be lost in conjecture, for the little oratory is assuredly modern; while the de Blonays are the great family of the neighbourhood and the woodland traversed is in their domain.[1] The stranger may wonder as he will, and yet any toddling child in the countryside can tell the story of Marie Aimée; while the elder folk will recall the fact that before the *oratoire* was built the spot was marked by a cross that had crumbled into dust because it was so very old.

[1] The shrine was built in 1896. "Neuvecelle," par Edmond Rollin. Evian, 1910.

One of the de Blonay castles stood in the village of St. Paul. Here Marie Aimée was born in December, 1590.[1] She was called Aimée after Victor Amadeus I, the then Duke of Savoy. Her father, the count, was a deeply religious man and Marie followed in his footsteps. She was educated at the Convent of St. Catherine at Annecy, where she received instruction from St. Francis de Sales and where she remained until she was eighteen years of age. She then returned to St. Paul and began to devote her life to religious works, to prayer and to the care of the poor and the unhappy.

On a certain fair morning in May—it will be now over 300 years ago—she was walking in this very glade with her companion. At the spot on the road where the shrine now stands she met seven poor men toiling up through the wood. They were young but in lamentable plight. They were ill and worn, wasted and in rags. Three of them limped along painfully for they bore dire wounds. Their wallets were empty and their faces drawn by the pinch of hunger. They humbly begged alms of the ladies. Marie at once took the leader by the hand and, with tears in her eyes, invited him and his comrades to come with her to the castle. It was a toilsome way, since St. Paul was distant some two miles and every step of the path was steep. Still it was the month of May when the cowslips are still ablaze, when the wood sparkles with anemones and when, as the road ascends, bank after bank is blue with gentian. At St. Paul she fed them and clothed them, dressed their wounds with her own hands, comforted them and brought a gleam of content into their weary eyes. As her father was away

[1] She died in 1649, and was buried in the vault of the church at St. Paul.

MARIE AIMÉE'S SHRINE

she found them lodgings in the village and left them there to sleep.

On the following morning they came up to the castle to take their leave. This parting between the girl châtelaine of St. Paul and the seven travel-worn men must have afforded an impressive picture. For a background was the wall of the great keep rising from the shadows of the moat. In the vault of the gateway, under the beams and chains of the drawbridge, stood the little lady with clasped hands and with the sun full upon her. Before her ranged the seven men so that their shadows reached her feet. The song of a bird in a tree pink with blossom alone broke the silence of the place.

One of the seven stepped forward to thank the lady for her charity and for the sympathy she had shown them. He spoke in the voice of one who was of noble birth. He begged her to devote her heart to the Seven Spirits who stand before the Throne of the Lamb, and added, "They will ever bear you in remembrance and will ever bless you and keep you and give you peace."

As he spoke a change passed over the faces of the seven. The haggard features became beautiful and a smile of infinite tenderness spread across the pallid lips. The uncouth cap changed to a halo of gold, the poor, tattered garments became pendent robes, bright as the moon, while the wallets on their shoulders were transformed into cloud-white wings.

Marie de Blonay, trembling with ecstasy, knelt on the ground in the gateway and buried her face in her hands. When she raised her eyes again to the sky the heavenly visitors had vanished.

XVIII

THE CASTLE OF ST. PAUL

ST. PAUL stands on the hillside over Evian, on a ridge which is 1,500 feet above the level of the Lake. From the shore it appears to be on the sky line, for the higher ground beyond is cut off from view. It is a place of great age and of still greater dignity, since it was for centuries a stronghold of the de Blonay family. Much of the history of this part of Savoy centres around St. Paul and its ancient castle.

The place is now little more than a hamlet, happy in the superb view it commands of the mountains on the one side and of the Lake on the other. It is a scattered settlement, very vague in its arrangement, since it has no definite street nor the formal attributes of a conscientious village. It consists merely of houses dotted about at wide intervals among hayfields and cherry orchards. In the place of any plan there is only a pleasant sense of irresponsibility and of doing as you please, for the houses seem to be wandering about like self-absorbed sheep in a pasture.

On an isolated green mound stands the church almost hidden by trees. I was told that it was at the end of the village, but the village has neither beginning nor end, nor would one venture to say whether the church was in the village or without it. It is not a beautiful

church, for, although quite venerable, it has been restored and rebuilt at unlovely periods. It boasts an immense square tower which can be seen for miles, or even from the other side of the Lake. The building has been plastered within and without, and has the plain square windows of a goods shed.

On the outer wall of the church, on its north side and close to the tower, is a wide pointed archway sealed with masonry. Along the edge of the arch a pretty pattern has been painted, while the wall on either side of the blocked entry shows traces of ancient fresco. This is the entrance to the de Blonay vault, where members of the family have been buried for many centuries. Here lie the early counts and barons of Blonay. Here rests that Marie Aimée de Blonay who met seven angels in the garb of mendicants, and from this vault escaped that lady of St: Paul who was buried alive, as is recounted presently. Near to the church is a convent and a fine old greyheaded *presbytère*.

The castle stood below the church and to the north of it. It occupied a commanding position, being built on the brink of the almost precipitous slope which drops, like a curtain, from St. Paul to the water's edge. It was constructed by Aymon de Blonay in 1233, or possibly earlier, was restored in 1665, and was allowed, soon after that date, to fall into decay.[1] It consisted, as the old drawings[2] show, of a great square building with a round tower in the centre. This structure stood upon a platform surrounded by a low battlemented wall, and at each of its four corners was a little square tower with

[1] "Haute Savoie," par A. Raverat. Lyons, 1872.

[2] "Groot Stedeboek van Piemont en van Savoye." The Hague, 1725.

a conical roof. The entrance to the castle looked towards the church. It can still be defined. From the eminence on which the château stands it is said that no fewer than seven of the de Blonay castles could be seen, including the famous château above Vevey.

Of the actual stronghold but little remains, for a company of cherry trees have taken possession of the place and grass has covered it as with a carpet. There are still in view the great fosse or ditch, the base of a central round tower, masses of half-buried masonry and, on the east, a part of the enceinte wall with deep-cut battlements. At the edge of the plateau is a little square tower, with a round-arched window, very pitiable to see; for it is the last upstanding fragment of the proud old house and the last of the four small towers already named.

One day, towards the end of the 17th century, Claudine, the young wife of the then Baron de Blonay, had been buried in the family vault under the church of St. Paul. On the night of her burial the half-demented husband was sitting alone in the hall of the castle, crushed with despair and in utter misery. His supper stood on the table untouched, his face was hidden in his hands, his whole frame shook with his sobbing. There came a faint knock at the door. He jumped up whispering to himself, "My God! It was just in that way she always tapped." As he turned the door opened, and his wife, clad in a shroud, staggered into the room and fell into his arms.

She had been in a trance that mimicked death and, seemingly lifeless, had been carried to the church and laid in the vault. The bricking-up of the vault was not

complete or possibly not commenced. When night fell a servant had crept into the entry for the purpose of stealing a certain ring from the lady's finger. He found her cold hand folded over a crucifix, seized it, and attempted to remove the ring. But the ring would not yield, so he drew out his knife and cut the finger off.

The pain of this savage wound woke the sleeper from her trance. With a gasp of horror she realized where she was, felt her way out of the awful place, and with unsteady steps stumbled down the path to the castle. It would have been a fearsome sight—if any chanced to see—the Lady of Blonay, in a shroud dabbled with blood, walking with bare feet to the very castle she had that morning left as a corpse.

The lady recovered and lived to have several children. One of her sons was that Baron Louis de Blonay who was equerry to Victor Amadeus II and who was present with that prince when Madame de Warens made so dramatic a scene in the church at Evian, as is detailed in Chapter XXXII. Both he and his mother are interred in the vault at St. Paul.

XIX

THE GREAT STONE AND THE HAUNTED LAKE

CLOSE to St. Paul are two objects which, in the estimation of the people of the country, are of more than local interest. They are the Great Stone and the Haunted Lake. The Great Stone stands by the side of the mule-path which mounts up from Evian to St. Paul. It takes the form of an enormous and very forbidding block of stone, smooth and almost black, which stands by itself in a field. It is surrounded by cherry trees and has implanted on its summit a lofty wooden cross. Geologically it is what is known as an "erratic."

The cross has been placed on the stone to avert further trouble, for the story of the *Pierregrosse* is as follows.[1] In the spring of 1278 there were great festivities in progress at the Castle of Larringes to celebrate the marriage of Jordane de Lucinges, the daughter of the house. After the bride and bridegroom had departed certain of the guests sat down to play at cards. They were—to be exact—the host, the Lord of Lucinges, the Marquis of Allinges-Coudrée, the Baron Amed de Blonay and M. de Billens, châtelain at Evian for the Count of Savoy. They played for three days and three nights without stopping. Candles were lit when

[1] "Au Pays Eviannais," par Alexis Bachellerie. Evian, 1909.

the sun set and shutters were thrown open when the dawn broke. Food and drink were kept on the table, and these noble persons, blinking through alternating phases of drunkenness and sobriety, continued to play for the immoderate period above stated.

Amed de Blonay lost and lost. He lost until his pockets were empty and until he had played away the beautiful chestnut grove of Allaman, the Forest of Lajoux, 10,000 cherry trees at Lugrin, the vines above Marâiche and a hunting-box outside Vevey. Several times during this protracted game his equerry had ridden over from St. Paul to beg his master to return, as the Lady de Blonay was immediately expecting her confinement and very anxious for her husband to come back.

On the evening of the third day Amed de Blonay, having had enough of card-playing, started to ride home. The night was dark; an appropriate thunderstorm was raging and he rode at a gallop. When near to St. Paul his horse stumbled and nearly threw him. "May the Devil come and take you!" hissed the count, who, at that moment, was aware of a black-clad figure by his side. "Yes," said the stranger to the astonished Amed, "I have come. I am Satan and no other. I can give you back all you have lost and more and make you besides the richest lord in the land if . . ." "If what?" asked the count eagerly. "If you will bring me at dawn, at this spot, the first creature born in your château after your return." "Agreed!" said the gambler.

When he reached the castle the child had not yet seen the light. Amed, sunk deep in his chair, sat in the

great hall waiting with an air of the deepest gloom. The bailiff entered to report to his lord such domestic events as had happened in his absence. The count paid little heed to this chatter, remaining sullen and silent; but on the mention of one occurrence he suddenly brightened, slapped his thigh and broke out into a roar of derisive laughter. The bailiff, having finished his report, withdrew in amazement, and scarcely had he left when the birth of the young de Blonay was announced.

Just before sunrise the count left the castle carrying under his cloak a bundle containing something soft. He reached the appointed place and saw, silhouetted against the faint light of the dawn, the black figure of the Devil, and by his side an enormous block of gold so bright as to be almost luminous. "Have you carried out our compact, Sir Count?" asked the Devil. "I have, Sir Satan," replied de Blonay, "and I hope you will like it." At the same moment he let loose from his cloak a newly-born pig. The Devil stamped and raged with fury. The little pig slunk back to the castle. The count smiled and placed his hand on the boulder of gold with an air of ownership. Whereupon the Devil, aiming a kick at the passing pig, struck the mass with his fist, with the result that the yellow glow faded from it and the great block changed into mere dull stone.

Here the story ends. The conclusion was not satisfactory to either party. The Devil vanished; the count, in reflective mood, followed the pig to the castle, and the rock remains as it appears to-day. To prevent a repetition of such unholy bargaining the pious folk of St. Paul erected a cross on the summit of the stone. It is a childish narrative, but the people who evolved it

THE GREAT STONE

DENT D'OCHE

are child-like and are apt to express their imagination in terms of the farmyard.

About 1¼ miles beyond St. Paul, in the direction of Bernex, is a place called La Gotetta, where is a *calvaire* with a modern chapel and the Stations of the Cross. The place is favoured by tourists on account of the imposing view it affords of the Dent d'Oche and of the valley which lies at its feet. Within sight of the chapel are two little lakes in a wood which are famous for their water lilies, their crayfish and their *ablettes*. The larger of these ponds, called La Beunaz, was at one time haunted by a dwarf of very high principles. He is said to have been just two feet in height, but in erudition he was a giant.

A farmer living near the lake had had great misfortunes and had, indeed, fallen upon such evil days that he had resolved to drown himself. He approached the lake for this purpose, deposited his hat and coat on the bank, together with the few sous in his pocket, and placed on the heap the customary letter to his wife. As he stepped back a pace or two to take the final leap, a voice from the pool called out "Don't do it!" The farmer recognized the voice as that of the dwarf. The dwarf then proceeded to give the farmer advice as to the care of his land and furnished him with what would be called "tips" in farm management. The farmer resolved to postpone his suicide and to try the reforms suggested; so he picked up his coat and hat, threw the letter into the lake and walked home.

So successful were the dwarf's proposals that the farm flourished and there followed very promptly a period of great good fortune. As Christmas drew near, the

farmer's wife—a kindly soul—felt that some recognition of the dwarf's good services should be attempted. So she made him a little suit of clothes, a jacket, a pair of very small breeches, some doll-like stockings and two tiny morocco shoes. The present was even more incongruous than Christmas presents usually are, since it was designed for a being who lived at the bottom of a lake.

Still, at Christmas Eve these pathetically ridiculous garments were spread, with fond care, by the water's edge, and the farmer, not to be behind his wife in generosity, stuffed some gold coins into the pocket of the absurd breeches. Next morning husband and wife went down smiling to the lake to see what had become of their egregious present. They were horrified to find the clothes torn into rags and the coins scattered along the bank; while a reproving voice rose from the deep, uttering these words: "Do good for good's sake and not for recompense." With this cutting rebuff ringing in their ears the two sorry imitators of Santa Claus crept home, with downcast heads and a few ridiculous rags in their hands.

XX

THE HOLLY OF THE TALKING CATS

BELOW St. Paul and towards the foot of the slope are three other castles (viz. those of Blonay, Allaman and Maxilly) which belong, or have belonged, to the famous family of de Blonay. The most important of these historically is the Château de Blonay, which stands near to the water's edge and is a conspicuous object to all who pass by on the Lake. This castle is believed to be the oldest of the de Blonay possessions and to be, indeed, the cradle of the race. It carries the mind back far, since Meredith Read states that "the house of de Blonay has maintained an uninterrupted male descent to the present day for nearly a thousand years."[1]

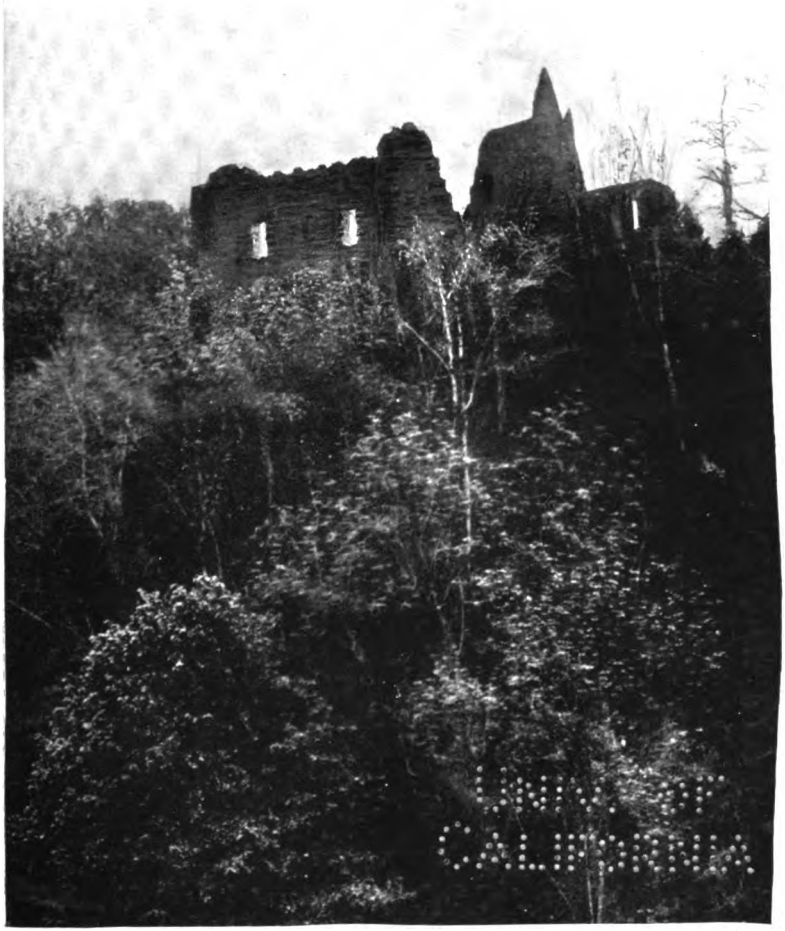
The château is at Tour Ronde, between Evian and Meillerie. It dates from the 11th century when it formed a primitive lake-side fortress. Later it is depicted in old prints as a mediæval stronghold within high walls, with a central keep supported by lofty towers and surrounded by a moat. The château has been rebuilt in recent years in a style without either character or charm. It is now merely a large ambitious house with a faint pretence to be feudal. Two old towers remain, but with facings so modern that they could be compared to a couple of harquebusiers in frock coats. There are still a moat with

[1] "Historic Studies in Vaud," etc., vol. i., page 469. London, 1897.

a bridge over it and some curious windows fashioned like keyholes.

By the roadside is a little chapel to St. Andrew. It marks the spot where Antoine de Beaufort, governor of the Castle of Chillon, landed in 1536 when he fled to avoid capture by the Bernese who had attacked his castle and had wrested it from the hands of Savoy. It marks also another landing which took place on the same day under conditions suspicious of exaggeration. One of the de Blonays was at Chillon when the castle fell. Being loyal to Savoy and determined to escape the hated Swiss, he mounted his horse and in full armour swam across the Lake to Tour Ronde, a distance of over eleven miles. To dispel any doubt as to this performance the natives point to an iron spring by the chapel as a proof that de Blonay *did* swim the Lake as affirmed, for in struggling ashore the horse, it appears, lost a shoe against a rock and from the rock gushed forth a spring of iron water which is running to this day. The chapel—the walls of which are very old—is, in fact, built on a mass of rock by the water's edge, and it is curious that the iron spring issues through an aperture from the solid, unfissured stone.

The Château d'Allaman lies behind Blonay, higher up the hill among the orchards. It is a large, rambling building which has suffered much from restorations and additions of various dates. It still presents, however, in the patchwork mass the old stolid "strong house," square and plain, with a round, ivy-covered tower by its side. A lithograph of about the year 1845 shows the castle as it was before the wings were added. It was then dilapidated, it is true, and although surrounded by all the



MAXILLY CASTLE

squalor of a farmyard had yet a dignity which is now a little lacking.[1]

The Castle of Maxilly stands in ruins near by the village of Maxilly. On the fringe of the domain is the *bois de Bedford*, a fine wood of chestnut trees, named after the Duke of Bedford as a souvenir of the *fêtes champêtres* given by him when he occupied the Château de Fonbonne at Evian while taking the Amphion waters. The position of the castle is romantic in the extreme, for its gaunt, grey walls rise from the brink of a deep ravine whose sides are dark with trees and in whose depths winds a stream that ever mutters mysteriously. This ravine is full of suspicious shadows, even at high noon; while at night, when an owl sails hooting down the cleft, it must be a place of dread.

The ruins are encompassed about by brushwood and almost hidden by trees. Such walls as remain are very high, are pierced by windows which, before the wood grew up, looked out upon the Lake and by doors which once opened into rooms but now into nothingness. In the best preserved part of the castle is the hall, in which is the great fireplace. The hearth is no less than 15 feet in width and is spanned by an arch, on the central stone of which is carved the de Blonay arms. Many a jovial company must have gathered round this fireplace with the glow of the burning logs on their faces; and sad must have been the day when the fire died out among the ashes for the last time. From the hall a stone stair leads up to a fragment of a room in which is a handsome *cheminée* decorated with plaster work, as well as with

[1] "Châteaux, Manoirs et Monastères des Environs de Genéve," par J. Lanz. Geneva.

paintings of birds and of a figure claimed to be that of Bacchus.[1]

The main gate of the castle still stands in the form of a fine rounded arch, which opens into the courtyard by the great hall. Just outside the gate is the Holly of the Talking Cats. It is an immense tree, the trunk of which is said to be 6 feet in girth and the height attained to be 40 feet. Whatever may be its exact dimensions, it is the largest holly tree I have chanced to meet with.

The legend of The Talking Cats is a little elusive. Francis Wey in his great work[2] says that he found the legend so complicated and tangled that he failed to make anything out of it after reading it no fewer than four times. I have gone a step further and have perused some four or five separate versions of the legend. They all vary; but out of the *mélange* it is possible to extract a composite narrative with the following features.

Maxilly came into the possession of the de Blonay family by marriage in the 18th century. The Lady Alix of Maxilly, who is concerned in the story, had two lovers, Raoul de Blonay and Robert d'Arbigny. One was virtuous, the other was not. It became evident, in course of time, that the lady's heart inclined towards de Blonay and that it was at his voice her face ever brightened. Robert d'Arbigny, on observing this preference, became filled with rage and foamed at the mouth. Maddened by jealousy, he resolved to rid the earth of his rival. He was disinclined to attempt this

[1] A sketch of the old château is given in "Groot Stedeboek van Piemont en van Savoye." *Tome* ii. The Hague, 1725.

[2] "La Haute Savoie," par Francis Wey. Paris, 1866.

himself because, in the first place, he was afraid of Raoul and, secondly, he doubted if he would commend himself to the lady when he appeared in the guise of a murderer.

Now, some miles west of Maxilly is a place called Féternes, where was a grotto occupied by three fairies. They were not good fairies, but were, on the contrary, conspicuously offensive both in their persons and in their habits. In the grotto they kept treasure. They also kept cats. These were not ordinary cats that sleep curled up on hearthrugs; but were animals terrible of aspect, being very large, with claws as big as scythes and with eyes that almost blinded those who gazed upon them. These lavishly endowed creatures were charged with guarding the treasure, and it was these very super-cats that Robert engaged to compass the death of Raoul.

The animals were apparently ordered to attack de Blonay as he was about to enter the Castle of Maxilly. They, indeed, flew upon him just outside the gate, at the very spot where the holly tree now grows. The fight was terrific and the noise made by the beasts ear-piercing, since cats are very shrill when fighting. Raoul's doublet was torn by the fearful claws; but he not only kept the cats at bay, but finally drove them before him with his flashing sword. As the cats retreated they called out "Robert is dead."

After the hideous combat was over de Blonay entered the castle. There, sitting in the great hall, was the lady shrivelled with terror and with her two hands clutching her hair. On her lap was a white cat. When the cat saw de Blonay it cried out "Robert is dead," and, having delivered itself of this information, jumped

through the window, as cats will. Later on the dead body of Robert was found by the postern.

Here the narrative comes to a sudden end. In order to complete the story and to provide an appropriate moral, I would venture to suggest that the cats mistook Robert for Raoul, and so unwittingly brought retribution upon the wicked and upon the virtuous peace.

Now, since this knowledge came to me, whenever I meet a white cat in a lonely place and when the cat stops and begins to open its mouth, I am always afraid that it will squeal out, "Robert is dead."

XXI

THE ABBEY OF ABONDANCE

HIGH up among the hills over Evian, at an altitude of 8,050 feet, is a valley called the Valley of Abondance. The valley is deep and very green and so rich in pasture that its name befits it well. A stream of water, clear as crystal, runs through the valley, while by its side is a long white road which leads from this solitude to the outer world. The sides of the valley are steep and are made almost black by a crowd of pine trees which stand erect on the slopes, like a dark, impassive company of monks with pointed cowls looking down upon their old abbey by the stream.

The village of Abondance is small, comfortable and very ancient. Its houses, with their brown overhanging roofs and long balconies, are most picturesque, while across the river is thrown a fascinating wooden bridge roofed over with mouse-grey shingles and covered in on both sides to protect it from the snow. Its timbers are ashen with age; it is dark as a cavern; while the echoes that issue from it when an ox-wagon lumbers through, or when a troop of boys clatters down from the school, almost drown the ceaseless clamour of the brook.

The church and the monastery are a little way up the hill-side, and command both the village and its bridge. The origin of the monastery is obscure. The legend that it was founded by St. Colomban in the

6th century appears to be unsupported by evidence.[1] What is undoubted is that in the 10th century the monks of the monastery of St. Maurice-en-Valais were so harassed by the Saracens that they sought refuge in the far away Valley of Abondance. Here, on land granted by Guy of Feternes, they founded in 1048 a priory and, later, an abbey. The first abbot was one Rodolphe, who was supreme between the years 1144-1158.[2]

The village itself was already long established, having had its origin as a small colony planted by the Burgundians in the 5th or 6th century. As the valley was difficult of access and far removed from any masterful highway, it remained isolated and undisturbed—so isolated, indeed, as to justify the claim that the natives of Abondance are Burgundians still; for those who are learned in these things affirm that the villagers even now present the features and characteristics of that ancient people. Their exceptional stature, their blue eyes, fine complexion and fair hair are the points insisted on. It is claimed, moreover, that the cattle of the valley are peculiar and have traits which are especially their own.

As time went on this remote offshoot from Burgundy became a sturdy place, very independent and sure of itself; for, while principalities and powers were hectoring in the world around, Abondance constituted itself a kind of republic and remained aloof as probably the tiniest independent state of its time. The abbey became a great ecclesiastical power. It extended its confines, acquired wealth and lands, so that at one time it held jurisdiction

[1] "L'Abbaye et la Vallée d'Abondance," par J. Mercier. Annecy, 1885.

[2] "Abondance," par L. E. Picard. "Mémoires et Documents de l'Académie Chablaisienne." *Tome* xviii. Thonon, 1904.

ABONDANCE: THE CLOISTERS

ABONDANCE: THE DOOR OF THE VIRGIN

over no fewer than 18 parishes and 22 priories. The abbey and the republic were not always at peace with one another. There were troubles, but possibly not a few of them were settled between the abbot and the Burgundian president over a mug of mulled claret in the abbot's very comfortable parlour. After a period of great glory the abbey fell into decay, became involved at the end in the Revolution of 1792, and was sold as national property a few years later.

The church, which is one of the most beautiful in Savoy, dates from at least the 18th century. It has been damaged more than once by fire and has suffered hardly less from neglect. Its quaint, effeminate steeple is but 200 years old, while its entry is still more recent, for the building was finally restored in 1894. As an example of its period it is now classed as a national monument. It consists of a nave and two transepts, and is very lofty throughout. Its simplicity, its elegance and its fine proportions are the chief attributes of the building. The vault of the choir is ogival. The columns are round and have primitive and curious capitals. As a whole it well illustrates the transition from the rounded to the pointed arch. In the arcades of the choir are certain painted statues on wood, which form the only jarring feature in this otherwise exquisite chapel.

The abbot's chair, accredited to the 14th and 15th centuries, is a beautiful specimen of wood-carving. It is surmounted by a Gothic canopy on which are little figures of the Apostles. These are claimed to be the work of the 15th century. A more archaic carving (ascribed to a century earlier) is on the right side of the chair. It represents three angels singing and holding a

book between them. They are evidently earnest and full of song and are yet unreasonably ugly. They have the mouths of negroes, or, as a French writer prefers, the mouths of frogs. The carving on the left side of the chair depicts a scene in hell. The 15th century stalls display much interesting detail, notably in the heads of men and women showing the garb of the time.

The monastery is represented by a vast expressionless building close to the church. It is the survivor of various fires, that of 1728 having been the most disastrous. It is now put to many purposes, is a wandering, miscellaneous structure, *une sorte de phalanstère* as one writer expresses it. It is, in the first place, the *mairie* of Abondance. It contains both the boys' and the girls' schools, provides, along its echoing corridors, a residence for the clergy and for other less definite people, while its fine refectory has been converted into a justice room. The entrance opens upon a vaulted hall with, in the centre, a single column. On one side of the hall is a large stone trough or *lavabo*, while on the other side are the outlines of an ample fireplace. This was the *chauffoir*, where the monks warmed themselves after the offices of the night or early morning.

A gorgeous valley full of flowers, an ancient church, a rambling monastery, Burgundian villagers and peculiar cows do not, however, exhaust the attractions of Abondance.

The great glory of the valley is the abbey cloister. It adjoins the church, was almost ruined in the fire of 1728, but has now been sympathetically restored. It forms a square and had originally four galleries or corridors, but that on the north side is now wanting. The cloister,

maimed as it is, still remains a structure of supreme beauty. It seems to be shut off from the world, for above its walls there is only the blue of heaven. In the centre, as a patch of green, is a square lawn. It is enclosed by a grey colonnade of Gothic arches, delicate and dainty as lace-work and as fragile looking. Within the screen of pillars and stone tracery there runs on each side a vaulted passage, the walls of which glow with the colours of old frescoes.

The place is silent and deserted, save that on the cloister roof some pigeons are preening their wings in the sun. Never could the magic effect of light and shade be more beautiful to see. Here the shadow of a column and its arch falls across the paved footway, and here a gleam of light illumines a patch of red and blue among the paintings on the walls. The cloister is, indeed, a place of serene delight, solemn as a strain of old church music, beautiful as an illuminated missal, pathetic as a memory of the dead.

The cloister was built by the Abbot Jean between the years 1831 and 1854, and the frescoes are believed to date from about the same period. They illustrate scenes in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Among them are the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, Christ disputing with the Doctors, and the Marriage Feast at Cana. Deonna and Renard[1] give drawings of the frescoes before they were restored, and it will be seen that they are in no way spoiled.

The interest of these remarkable wall-paintings is largely due to the fact that they represent the people and the country of the period in which they were designed.

[1] "L'Abbaye d'Abondance." Geneva, 1912.

There are, for example, the curious houses, a street, glimpses of landscape and the dress of men and women of various stations in life. In the fresco of the Feast at Cana we see the table laid, the dishes (mostly of fowls), the knives (but not the forks), the ewers and cups, the salt-cellars and, generally, the table manners of the time. It may be noticed, by the way, that the men dined in their hats and that all, apparently, ate with their fingers. On one side is the kitchen, with a pot hanging before the fire and a lavish supply of hams and sausages in the background. On the other side is a servant bringing in the water that is to be turned into wine. In the Nativity fresco are the stable and manger of the 14th century, a scene which differs strangely from the gaudily decorated cavern shown in Bethlehem at the present day. There is also a mill which is difficult to associate with Palestine.

The key-stones of the cloister vault are decorated by ingenious medallions showing the signs of the Zodiac and the months of the year. At the church end of the cloister is the famous Door of the Virgin. It presents a shouldered arch with above it a tympanum in which is carved the Virgin seated with the Child in her lap. Two angels kneel before her, while two others place a crown upon her head. On either side of the entry is a large female statue. The one on the left represents the Synagogue or Old Testament, the one on the right the Church or New Law. Both are crowned, but the figure of the Synagogue is blindfolded. Deonna and Renard give, in the work previously mentioned, a drawing of a more recent statue of the Synagogue at Strasbourg in which the eyes also are blindfolded but the head uncrowned.

XXII

FROM EVIAN TO BOUVERET

THE general aspect of the Lake shore between Evian and the Rhone valley has been already alluded to (page 88). A high road follows the water's edge all the way. The first three villages met with—**Grande Rive, Petite Rive** and **Tour Ronde**—are of no particular concern, although Petite Rive may serve as a typical example of a lake-side village, where every man is half fisherman and half tiller of the soil. Tour Ronde derives any importance it may possess from its association with the Château de Blonay (page 128) and its title from a round tower built here by the Counts of Savoy for the defence of the coast. Of the tower only the name survives, for it was destroyed in the Revolution of 1789. In an old print by C. Hackert, dated 1788, it appears as a low, round blockhouse with loopholes, and is neither formidable nor picturesque. Within a few kilometres of Tour Ronde is Meillerie, which is dealt with in the chapter which follows, while some two miles beyond Meillerie is Bret.

Bret is a little, cringing, begrimed hamlet placed at the very foot of gorgeous and majestic hills, like a door-mat at the threshold of a palace. It stands some way above the shore, shivering in the shade, for it is only during the rare days of summer that a ray of sun falls upon it. How it came to pass that human beings ever

settled in this spot must remain one of the mysteries of the Lake. The inhabitants have shown persistence in clinging to their homes, for in 1584 the village was swept away by a landslip, on which occasion 122 people lost their lives. It is picturesque because it is so old, so disordered, so careless. It is just an untidy heap of odd dwellings, disposed with no more method than would ensue if the whole place—houses, lanes and courtyards—had been tumbled out of a cart at the bottom of the hill.

In olden days the way by the Lake was so narrow that it was known as the Pass of Bret. According to Bouchet the most ancient of the archives of Evian is concerned with the woods of Bret. That document, bearing the date 1296, contains an order from Count Amadeus forbidding the pasturage of goats in these woods. It further appears that Count Pierre, who preceded this Amadeus, had granted the woods of Bret to the town of Evian as a reward for services its men had rendered in the wars with the Valaisians in 1285.

St. Gingolph, viewed from a passing steamer, is, without doubt, the most beautifully placed town on the Lake, since it has for its background the grandest tract of scenery that the shore provides. It is around St. Gingolph that the mountains come nearest to the water's edge and reach to their greatest height. At their base lies the town, like some ornament in pearl and grey on the hem of a drooping curtain of green.

Behind the town a gorge, shrouded with trees, descends with many mysterious windings. This is the Vallon de Novel. The mountain to the east of it (the Grammont) rises to a point 5,900 feet above the surface

PETITE RIVE: A TYPICAL LAKE-SIDE VILLAGE

of the Lake, while that to the west (the Blanchard) climbs to 8,400 feet. About the lower ranges of these hills are homely trees, while above them rise, in ever-mounting tiers, the sombre pines—until they reach a wall of precipices slashed with snow and rounded by the blue of heaven. The ravine is ominous, for as it turns out of sight, far up the steep, there is a sense that it must open into some dreadful place among the hills.

Down this gorge tumbles the torrent of the Morge, which, hurrying headlong through the town, falls boisterously into the Lake. The torrent and the Vallon de Novel mark the frontier between Switzerland and France. They divide St. Gingolph into two parts —one Swiss, one French—with between them only the bond of a small stone bridge. No frontier could be less formidable nor less appropriate to the grave business of the scrutiny of passports and the rummaging of bags. One would expect to come upon a tower or a spiked gate; but in their place are only two deferential cafés.

Those who would retain an impression of the beauty of St. Gingolph should view it only from the Lake or from Vevey across the water. The nearer the town is approached the less attractive does it become, so that by the time its streets are entered it has dwindled to a quite plain and ordinary place. According to the guide books the two parts of St. Gingolph display, in strong contrast, the characteristics of the French on the one side and of the Swiss on the other. This is not, however, apparent; for the two nations would appear, at this point, to have "pooled" both their virtues and their failings and to have produced thereby a town which in social tint is merely nondescript and drab.

St. Gingolph, in the Middle Ages, is said to have been a sober town without ambition or pretence and to have been for long under the fatherly control of the Abbey of Abondance. In the Swiss quarter is a little chapel of much charm which dates from the year 1587. In front of it is an arcade of rounded arches, supported by pillars with capitals of a mildly classic type. Near by are an old archway and an entry which was once the portal of a convent. In the hall of the gendarmerie is a door with an ogival arch bearing the date 1588. Beyond these relics there is little of interest in either section of the double town.

About a couple of miles from St. Gingolph is **Bouveret.** The situation of Bouveret is scarcely less beautiful than that of St. Gingolph. The town stands on a densely wooded cape at the very opening of the Rhone valley, and has for a background those imperious mountains which give such grandeur to the scenery of this extremity of the Lake.

The town itself is of no interest. Almost all traces of the old village have vanished, for Bouveret has become a favourite tourist resort and space has had to be found for the cafés, restaurants, hotels, shops and *pensions* that represent the price a town has to pay for popularity of this kind.

The adventure which befell John Evelyn at Bouveret is dealt with in Chapter XXIV.

XXIII

MEILLERIE AND ITS LOVE STORY

MEILLERIE is a little fishing village, brown and sunburnt, which squats on a pebbly beach with its feet in the water. It is old; it is not clean; it is artistically untidy. Its situation is superb, for it lies at the foot of a steep mountain-slope covered with trees as if with velvet. Between the green of the hill and the blue of the Lake it appears as a brown patch edged with grey—the brown being the housetops, the grey the beach. So narrow is the ledge between the mountain wall and the shore that, in olden days, there was no lake-side road at this point, but only a path for the pack-horse.

Huge rocks came down to the water's edge in tumbled masses at a promontory just to the east of the village. These were the "rocks of Meillerie" made famous by Rousseau and by the unequal efforts of many draughtsmen and painters. The rocks have disappeared. The quarryman, who is no respecter of landscape, has carried them away, while a wide road has taken the place of the ancient mule-path. This road, running from Evian to St. Gingolph, was constructed about the years 1800-6 to supplement the great highway which was then sweeping across the Simplon Pass.

Meillerie is divided into two parts, the old village and

the new. The new dates from the time of the building of the road, and is made up of commonplace houses which are ranged along the route with decorous dullness. The older village lies below, as close to the beach as it can creep, so that the new Meillerie looks down upon its very roofs. It consists of one narrow, unsteady lane, dark and not free from smell, that represents the high street of centuries ago. The houses, with their overhanging roofs, their wooden balconies, their outside stairs, their dormer windows and incongruous doors, are effective from an artist's point of view, but would be distasteful to a sanitary inspector. They are advanced in years, for the dates over the doors show that they belong, for the most part, to the commencement of the 18th century. The fronts of the houses are in the lane; the backs are on the Lake, and are hung about with fishing nets, have boats made fast to their door-posts and ropes and fish-traps clinging to their walls or lumbering their galleries.

Above the door of one house is a stone upon which is carved a crown, together with the words, "A la Couronne. Bon Logis. 1787. P.V." This was, no doubt, the chief inn of Meillerie two centuries ago. The crown is above suspicion, but the "bon logis" may be a matter for divided views. One old house on the beach has inscribed on stone above the entrance, "I. Sache. Notere. 1762." So it is evident that at least one member of a learned profession lived in this amphibious town in times gone by.

High above the village is the old church with a fine square tower of the 18th century, in which are two quaint little windows of that period. The choir is old

and belongs to the early days of the pointed arch, while the body of the church is comparatively modern. Round the church, which was formerly a priory of the Great St. Bernard, is a cluster of semi-ecclesiastical buildings with Gothic entries.

There is nothing romantic about Meillerie, unless it be its situation and its sweet-sounding name, and yet there has been a time when Meillerie was flooded by the limelight of romance, was a place of rapture to many and a Mecca for the passionate pilgrim. It was thus endowed because it came, together with Clarens, into the scenery of Rousseau's famous story, "Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse." This book was published in 1761, had an immense vogue and was read all over Europe. It reflected the sentiment of the day, to which it gave glowing and indeed brilliant expression.

The ideal attitude affected by the youth of the time was that of sorrow. Melancholia was a cult. It was the doom of the hero of Rousseau's tale to be shut out of Paradise. A hectic passion that could never be gratified and a cloud of oppression were his lot. Between him and the adored one stretched an abyss of despair. Into that abyss they wept and across it they exchanged sobs and hysterical moanings.

The youth and the lady were regarded with acute pity by those who read their story, while the more miserable they were the more they were adored. Red-eyed women, throbbing with sympathy, and would-be-unhappy youths came to Meillerie as to a shrine of burning hearts or a morgue of dead aspirations. They picked forget-me-nots from among the rocks of Meillerie and pressed them between the leaves of cherished books. They gathered

rose leaves at Clarens and "bathed them with tears," for to bathe things with tears was an emotional habit of the time.

"Julie" is a notable book, full of fine passages and idyllic pictures. It is a book that embraces a wide range of human emotions; although it displays a passion that is often a little falsetto in tone and a morality so facile that the book has been denounced as "a real danger to women and young men."[1] It is, moreover, marred by its diffuseness, by its quite unendurable length and by the cumbrous form it takes, for the tale is told in a series of letters, one of which may alone cover twenty pages.

For the sake of those who may have forgotten the story—and for the relief of the many who may lack the patience to read it—I append a brief précis of the doleful tale, since Meillerie is a place of no interest whatever apart from Julie.

Julie, the heroine, was the only daughter of noble parents. The family resided at Clarens. The mother was an ineffectual and negative lady, but the father was proud and violent and typical of that variety of parent known on the stage as the "heavy father." The hero, Saint-Preux, was of humble origin but well educated. When the story opens he was giving lessons to Julie as a casual tutor, with the approval of the tepid mother but without the knowledge of her husband. The teacher and his pupil fell in love with one another. The father, when he found that Saint-Preux was taking no payment for his instruction, forbade his services unless he accepted an appropriate salary. Saint-Preux declined to take

[1] "Le Léman," par Bailly de Lalonde. *Tome* i, page 349. Paris, 1842.

MEILLERIE

money for improving his Julie's mind and was, therefore, told somewhat curtly to go.

The lovers could now only come together in secret, their chief place of meeting being a little shrubbery or thicket which came to be known as the *Bosquet de Julie*. Vandal builders have passed over this hallowed spot like a swarm of locusts, so that the *bosquet* has vanished and in its place are shops, garages and gas-works.

Julie felt the new position difficult, for her conscience was tender. She therefore banished Saint-Preux to Meillerie. Here he raved and wept. He longed, he said, to die at her feet, his brain reeled, his heart was torn to pieces, while his agony consumed him like a fire. He threatened to end it all by suicide, for he wrote, "the rock is sheer, the lake is fathomless and I am in despair."

He probably lodged at La Couronne, the inn in the dismal lane. He would sit on the rocks of Meillerie and gaze at Clarens until he was nearly demented. With a spy-glass the curé lent him he could make out Julie's house and the garden in which she walked. He frequented a grotto where he could sigh in solitude. The grotto is said to have been swept away by the quarryman, but there is no evidence that it ever existed.

Julie sank into an appropriate state of nervous prostration and became so ill that Clara, a sympathetic cousin, secretly begged the lover to return. He did. After an explosion of rapture he proposed elopement. Julie declined, pleading her duty to her parents.

Saint-Preux again went into banishment. About this time an English peer (cautiously called "Lord

B ") entered upon the scene. This nobleman, when intoxicated, made remarks about Julie that Saint-Preux considered insulting. Saint-Preux struck him, and was, in due course, challenged to a duel. Julie intervened in a very charming and diplomatic letter. The peer apologized and became the lovers' dearest friend, practically adopted Saint-Preux and provided him with an income for life.

Lord B, then, with great daring, interviewed Julie's father and begged that tyrant to allow Saint-Preux to marry his daughter, as the youth was now possessed of suitable means. The father, spluttering with rage, refused to contemplate a proposal so wounding to his pride of race. The English peer then took the lover away so that his mind might be diverted by the vicissitudes of travel. This involved endless letters of description dealing with familiar spots and many weary dissertations upon most things under the sun.

Now, on a sudden, an event happened in the quiet home at Clarens which had the effect of a thunder-clap. Saint-Preux's letters to Julie were discovered by the easily inflamed father. There followed a cyclone of violent denunciations, of harsh sayings, of weeping and wringing of hands, of sobbing in locked rooms. In the hush after the storm the terrified Julie found herself compelled to marry a Mons. Wolmer, who was "nearly fifty" and, at the same time, dull, plain and prosaic.

Julie had two children and claimed to be, in time, not unhappy. She, however, continued her correspondence with Saint-Preux. Mons. Wolmer was a man of eccentric mind and unusual views, for when he learned the story of his wife and her lover he promptly invited

Saint-Preux to come and stay with them. Saint-Preux, of course, came. The meeting with his Julie was moving beyond expression, although it must have been tempered somewhat by the ponderous presence of Mons. Wolmer.

Saint-Preux continued to live with this exceptional couple for an indefinite period. The conduct of the two lovers was beyond reproach, for Julie was immaculate. Saint-Preux became the tutor to the children of his dear, and there fell upon this strange household such peace as may be found among the ashes of a smouldering fire.

At the end Julie dies. Sad to say, she is long in dying, and her farewell utterances exceed in length any which literature has hitherto given to the world. She leaves behind her a letter for Saint-Preux telling him that her love has never wavered and that to the end she was his and his alone. With this letter—the sweetest and most pathetic of them all—the story closes.

In the year 1816, in the month of June, Byron and Shelley came to Meillerie, drawn there solely by adoration of Julie. Shelley considered the poor village "enchanted ground," for it had been the place of exile of Saint-Preux.[1] They sailed down from Montalegre, which is close to Cologny, a suburb of Geneva. They were both very earnest young men, both a little touched by the miasma of melancholy and both spellbound by the story of Saint-Preux and his beloved. They, no doubt, recited passages of the book as they sailed along, for with "the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination" they were both infatuated. Byron at the time was twenty-eight and Shelley twenty-four.

Near Meillerie they were overtaken by a sudden squall

[1] "History of a Six Weeks' Tour." London, 1817.

which nearly rent the sail from the ship and drove it half under water, so that they were in great danger of being swamped. Byron was a fine swimmer. He threw off his coat and, standing with his legs apart on the rolling deck, was prepared to do heroic deeds. Shelley was not so prepared. He was no swimmer. He felt that death was upon him, but his greater fear was that his friend, in his determination to save him, would lose his own life. He therefore clung to the seat with both hands, determined that he would sink with the vessel. He also had removed his coat, and one may assume that from its pocket protruded the yellow cover of the book that had lured them to apparent death.

Nothing tragical followed, for the vessel was blown into the harbour of St. Gingolph, and the two poets stepped ashore with their dripping coats on their arms. The episode had some fascination for them, since it was at this very spot and in a gale of like temper that Julie and Saint-Preux were nearly wrecked in an excursion they took on just such a summer's day.

Later the two dreamers sailed to Clarens and walked with bared heads in the sacred *bosquet*. Here they picked flowers, which they imagined Julie had herself planted, and scattered the petals to the breeze, so that they might be wafted to the adored one, for they felt that her spirit still hovered in the well-remembered grove.

XXIV

JOHN EVELYN AT BOUVERET

JOHN EVELYN, aged 26, the squire of Wootton, was in 1646 at Milan, which he considered "a sweate place." He was proposing to cross the mountains to Geneva. With him were certain friends and, among them, a Captain Wray, who provided what playwrights call "comic relief" in a somewhat dramatic company. Wray is described as "a good drinking gentleman" who had recently bought a pretty nag from an innkeeper for eight pistoles.[1] He had the unfortunate habit, both when drunk and sober, of firing off his gun if he was the subject of any exceptional emotion. He also had with him a dog which he had brought from England and which he claimed to be a water spaniel, but which Evelyn affirmed was only "a huge, filthy cur."

At Milan they were invited to dine at a palace by a total stranger who had picked them up in the street. This incautious man described himself as a "Scots colonel who had an honourable command in the citty." After dinner the colonel was anxious to display his horses, so the party adjourned to the stables. The colonel mounted a horse in order to show off its paces, but unfortunately the gallant officer "was a little spirited with wine," so spirited, indeed, that he was thrown, was badly injured,

[1] A pistole was worth 16s. 2d.

and died next day. Evelyn, who had already been chased down the streets as a spy when he was found peeping into a house to see "the tapissries," thought that the sooner they left Milan the better. So they hurried off in the morning.

Having crossed the Lago Maggiore in a boat, they reached the foot of the Alps and proceeded to climb up to the Simplon Pass. There was, in those days, no road over the pass, but merely a track. The month was September and the weather bad. They could only get mules to ride, while Wray's pretty nag carried the luggage.

The journey was unpleasant in the extreme. Evelyn loathed a mountainous country. He hated "the strange horrid and fearfull craggs and tracts onely inhabited by beares, wolves and wild goates." He hated the terrible roaring of waterfalls and the bridges composed only of a felled tree over "cataracts of stupendious depth." He hated the people for "having monstrous gullets or wenns of fleshe growing to their throats, some of which were as big as an hundredpound bag of silver." He disliked their "puffing dress, furrs and barbarous language" and was, above all, disgusted with the "very infamous wretched lodging" that they provided, for in one place he lay on a bed stuffed with leaves "that crackled and did so prick his skin thro' the tick that he could not sleepe."

Near the Simplon Wray's "filthy cur" chased a herd of goats down the rocks into a river. The villagers declared that one was killed in this stampede, and demanded "mony." Wray, under the influence of emotion, fired off his gun; the party spurred their mules

and tried to bolt. They were stopped by the enraged villagers, were dragged off their saddles, deprived of their arms and hustled into the room of an inn, where, in due course, "a score of grim Swisse" (the elders of the place) condemned them to pay a pistole for the goat and ten more for attempting to ride away.

They came upon much snow; managed to cross the pass and began to descend. Here Wray's horse slipped over a precipice and, rolling down the slope, landed on a bank of loose snow. Wray was so moved by this behaviour of his horse that he was about to fire at it—according to his habit when deeply stirred—but was restrained by his friends. He contented himself with hurling stones at the horse, with the result that the aggrieved animal began to plunge, fell over another precipice and rolled so far down the slope that it took the travellers two miles by the path to reach it. They found "the pretty nag" unnerved and benumbed, but otherwise unhurt.

Finally, after wading through what Evelyn calls an ocean of snow, they reached Brigue. Here they found that "almost every doore had nail'd on the outside a beare's, wolfe's or foxe's head and divers of them all three: a savage kind of sight." They had now only to follow the Rhone to the Lake of Geneva. They still met with adventures, but of a minor type. Evelyn was rejoiced to be out of a country "so melancholy and troublesome"; but he continued to find the mountains "horrid" and hated the people, because he found them "very clownish and rustically clad after a very odd fashion, for ye most part in blew cloth, very whole and warme."

In a few days they reached Bouveret, arriving in the evening, travel-stained and worn. Evelyn made for the inn, where he demanded a room, explaining that he was so exhausted he must go to bed immediately. The landlady regretted that there was not a vacant chamber in the house. This would not do for the masterful squire of Wootton. He would have a room, and that at once. One can imagine him pounding upstairs and stamping along the corridor, smacking his leg with his riding whip and demanding at each door who occupied this room or that.

One chamber, the landlady said, was occupied by her daughter, who was in bed. This was enough for the squire. The daughter must be turned out and sleep elsewhere, as he was so fatigued that he must lie down at once. The good woman expostulated, became voluble and excited, shrugged her shoulders, waved her head to and fro and stretched her hands out with the palms to heaven. It is probable that Evelyn understood but little of her patois. He seems, however, to have caught something about changing the sheets. Changing the sheets! Bah! He would have no changing of sheets! Turn the girl out, and he would jump into bed at once, as he was almost too tired to stand.

The girl was turned out. Evelyn seized the room and, throwing off his clothes, jumped into bed. He found the bed warm. In fact, he found it very warm, for the girl had smallpox and had been in a high state of fever.

Next day Evelyn and his friends hired a "bark" and sailed to Geneva. It will be no matter of surprise that soon after his arrival at that city he was down with

the smallpox. He felt so ill that he thought his very eyes would drop out. It was a trying illness, for he was nursed by a Swiss matron whose "monstrous throat" filled him with alarm whenever he awakened from a troubled sleep and saw this dreadful woman with the bulging neck hanging over him.

He was in bed fifteen days and confined to his room for five weeks. The illness was expensive, for he had to pay 45 gold pistoles to the keeper of the inn and 5 pistoles to his doctor. He gives a good description of Geneva as he saw it, and was much heartened when he was well enough to sally forth and play a game at "mall." He says "this towne is not celebrated for beautifull women," and yet the susceptible Captain Wray fell in love with one of them and was so mightily enamoured that he was unable to discuss any plan for their future journey, nor even to think upon it.

Ultimately they all went down by boat to Lyons. From there they appear to have struck across country to Orleans. At Orleans, Wray, whom Evelyn speaks of as "our mad captaine," was left behind. It may be surmised that Wray, when he saw his friends pass out of sight, was so overcome by his feelings that he again let off his gun.

It is to be regretted that Captain Wray kept no diary, for he was a man of sentiment and of varied attainments who appeared to attract adventure. The amorous Wray, with his nag, his unruly dog, his passion for gun-firing and his love of drink, must surely, on his way back to England, have met with incidents which would have been worth recording.

XXV

ACROSS THE RHONE

JUST as the western end of the Lake at Geneva appears to be closed by a dam or barrier of houses, so does the Lake on the east appear to be brought to an end against a barrier of trees. In neither case does there seem—at first sight—to be a gap through which the Rhone could either enter or escape. It is not until Bouveret is left behind and the steamer is making its way to the opposite shore that the Rhone can be seen to dart out of the thicket in which it has been hiding and make for the open. Its waters are turbid, tired-looking and the colour of potter's clay. They blunder into the Lake, where they form an eddy of dirty water in a pool that is clean.

There is no romance about the entry; no suggestion of the far-off glacier melting in the sun; no idea of welcome. There is simply a sense of an intrusion and a regret that the water is so thick and so unpleasing. The Lake seems to feel this, for although the two join, as they must, they do not mix. They keep apart. A hard line separates the clear blue from the muddy grey. The river seems to feel it too, for, after its first fouling of the Lake, it disappears as if it dived to the bottom out of shame.

There is no view of the Rhone Valley more delectable than that from the Lake, as the steamer crosses from

TOWER AT PORTE DU SEX

CHESSEL CHURCH

shore to shore. The valley is long and wide; its walls are the flanks of mountains; its floor is a "level mead," dotted with trees and as green as the Lake is blue. There is no sign of a river, of a road, nor of any work of man. As the valley makes its way into the unknown the light that fills it becomes whiter, the colours fade, all outlines cease to be distinct and it ends in a mist above which rise lilac-tinted peaks capped with snow.

Not far beyond Bouveret and in the floor of the valley is the **Pont du Sex**—the last bridge over the Rhone before it reaches the Lake. Guide book after guide book has burst into rapture over this bridge, a venerable, wooden bridge which was roofed over from end to end. It has been described as the most picturesque object on the Lake, has been spoken of as "poetical" and declared to be "a wonder." It was built in 1889 by a carpenter from Martigny named Roulier, with the help of his son-in-law. Before these two self-sufficing carpenters built the bridge the Rhone was only to be crossed by a ferry-boat from Chessel. The old bridge was replaced in 1905 by one of iron, a bridge so ugly as to be really heroic. This latter work *can* claim to be a wonder—a wonder of frightfulness. If there be perfection in ugliness, this mass of dreadful iron has reached a point beyond which imagination cannot aspire. It had to come. It fulfils the functions of a bridge; it is strong; it is safe. The dear old, delightful bridge was none of these things. It was merely beautiful. It shook in the wind; it bent to the flood. It could carry a company of pattering goats, but the ox-wagon made it afraid and the motor car caused it to shake and tremble like a very old man.

By the bridge is an ancient gateway, the Porte du Sex. On one side of it is a precipice, and on the other is a tower as steep. The tower bears the date 1676. Behind it is a surly and determined-looking building, with windows heavily grilled with iron and with shutters painted in the brave colours of the canton. This *château-fort* was built in 1597 to command the entrance into the Rhone valley. It was rebuilt in 1676, as the date on the tower confirms, and was for long the residence of the châtelain of Bouveret. The building was much damaged by the inundation of 1902, when the whole floor of the valley was under water as far up as Vouvry, which is a kilometre above the Porte du Sex.

Across the bridge the road leads through a flat and luxuriant country where are many trees and fields which sing of the goodness of the land. Then comes the little hamlet of **Chessel**, a perfect realization of the hamlet of the simple life. It has an ancient church as small as itself. Its stone steeple is anterior to the 16th century. The church—restored in 1777—is the type of church that a child would build with a box of bricks, for it has the tower and the steeple that the toy-maker supplies. It may be inappropriate to apply the term "comical" to a place of worship, but Chessel church *is* comical, just as a young puppy is comical. It is so immature and so assuredly a church in its babyhood. It has a little vaulted choir, a tiny pulpit and a small recess that would be a side chapel if it were not used to store wood for the stove. Moreover, the church stands in an orchard, and when seen through a cloud of pink and white blossoms is a picture of simplicity.

Beyond Chessel and still in the Rhone Valley is the

NOVILLE

village of **Noville.** It would probably call itself a town, for it has a *Maison de Ville* where serious documents of State are pasted on the wall. Noville is untroubled by the world, is away from the beaten track and the tourist knows it not. It is unspoiled and is a village that belongs to the "real" country. It has many charming houses; some with wide wooden balconies piled the one above the other, some with inviting outside stairs, as well as cottages which are almost buried in climbing roses and are as bright with flowers as a church door on a wedding day. The place is a mixture of a farmyard and a village. The cow-shed opens its pungent doors by the side of the shop, while the manure heap and the stack of winter wood find prominent places in the main street.

The pride of Noville is its ancient church, which is mentioned as long ago as 1177 in a bull of Pope Alexander III. The square ivy-covered tower is surmounted by a curious stone steeple which only an architect could fitly describe. The church has been intelligently restored. The Swiss habit of smothering anything antique with plaster has been abandoned. The walls show the bare stone, while every structure of interest—Romanesque or Gothic—appears to have been piously preserved. The side chapel belongs to the 15th century, while the choir shows traces of paintings of a century earlier.

By the side of the church is a beautiful old house of such charm that it is worth a journey to Noville to see it. It has a glorious roof, double ogee windows with transoms and shutters painted in bold stripes of white and green. It would belong, apparently, to the late 16th century.

Probably there are very few who will be concerned to know that at Noville in the year 107 B.C. the Helvetes —the tiresome people who would persist in crossing the Geneva bridge—defeated the Romans in masterly fashion and killed the consul and also his nephew.

The road across the Rhone Valley ends at **Villeneuve,** which is on the Lake side, has a pier and is the terminus of the tram-line from Vevey. It is curious that a place called the New Town should be one of the oldest towns on the Lake. It was a very important Roman settlement, and during the Middle Ages was a town of consequence. The early traveller may never have heard of Geneva or Lausanne, but he knew Villeneuve. Villeneuve stood on the road between Italy and Gaul, for the one available pass across the mountains was, at that time, the Great St. Bernard. It not only stood on the road; it held it as an outpost of Chillon.

A vast company of people passed through Villeneuve —merchants and pedlars, minstrels and men-at-arms, pilgrims on their way to Rome, people who were seeking a new world and others who were fleeing from an old. Villeneuve exacted a toll from all who passed through its gates. In 1286 in 218 days the collector of dues dealt with 2,211 bales of French and Lombard cloth, 1,448 bundles of wool and hides, 2,568 loads of salt and 810 packs of merchandise.[1] The tolls collected in 1279 amounted to 845 livres, which is calculated to represent, in the coinage of to-day, half a million francs.[2] Villeneuve, moreover, had much to sell, not a little to buy,

[1] "Autour du Lac Léman," par Guillaume Fatio. Geneva, 1902.

[2] "Dictionnaire Historique du Canton de Vaud." *Tome* ii, p. 789. Lausanne, 1921.

and vast amounts of money to change. Its one long street was thronged the week through; its warehouses were packed; its shops and its booths were the wonder of all who found their way into this Vanity Fair. A vast number of Jews and Lombards were attracted to the town by its prosperous trade. They were not well received by the people. In 1348, when the "Black Death" was raging, the Jews of Villeneuve were accused of poisoning the wells between Clarens and Vevey. They were arrested and imprisoned at Chillon, were tortured and confessed. The people of Villeneuve were so infuriated that they burst into the castle, dragged the Jews out and burnt them alive in the road.

Owing to many causes Villeneuve began to decline towards the end of the 14th century. Fewer and fewer travellers passed along the road, the Customs receipts dwindled in proportion, and the once crowded market-place became quieter and at last almost still.

In 1286 the pious Aymon, fourth son of Thomas, Count of Savoy, founded in the town the Hospital of St. Mary for the relief and comfort of all pilgrims who passed along the road as well as of the sick who might fall by the way. Aymon himself was stricken with disease, and this hospital was his offering of gratitude to Heaven for such years of life as he was spared. It is said that there were times when as many as 600 loaves were given out in a day and when there were no fewer than one hundred sick persons within the hospital walls. The Hostel of St. Mary had a large staff of priest-physicians and, for long after Aymon's death, was fitly maintained by the house of Savoy as well as by money collected from wealthy travellers and grateful patients.

In later years the hospital ceased to be of service, but it was not given up without a struggle. There were few, if any, patients, it is true, but there were still large funds to treat. So the place became—as one author terms it—*une retraite de consolation* for the *hospitalier* and his friends. Thus in 1659 the controller of the empty hospital enjoyed a pension of 400 silver florins; his wife came in for 125 florins and the baker for 112; while the woman cook drew 40 florins, together with 4 barrels of corn, 4 "chars" of white wine and 2 of red.[1] Villeneuve had ample leisure to enjoy this scandal.

Old Villeneuve must have been a very picturesque spot. It was surrounded by a wall and possessed three gates. An old drawing depicting one of these gates shows what a sturdy and trim place it was in the days of its glory.[2] At that entrance to the town which looks towards Chillon were a great square tower, a chapel to the Virgin and the Hospital of St. Mary already named. These were all built by Aymon about the year 1286. The tower, with the chapel at its foot, stood on one side of the road, the hospital on the other. The hospital has been entirely swept away and a school built in its place. The tower—a square solid block—still stands. The lower part is old and with little doubt dates from Aymon's time, but the upper part, with its faintly pointed arches, is more recent, although still some centuries old. The chapel, which will have been more than once rebuilt, has been converted into the *Maison de Ville*. It bears over the door the arms of the town and the dates 1286-1876, the latter being the year of

[1] "Dictionnaire Historique de Vaud." *Tome* ii, 1921.

[2] "Histoire du Canton de Vaud," par P. Maillefer, p. 455. Lausanne, 1903.

its final restoration. Within will be seen a fine Gothic vault, which forms the roof of a school, on the one side, and of offices on the other. These buildings are by the side of the railway station through which will thunder the Simplon express that now, in a flash, carries through Villeneuve travellers who, in old days, toiled through the town on foot, in litters, on horses or on mules.

As to the Villeneuve of the present time it is needless to say that it shows no traces of its former splendour. It has gone to the other extreme, and is now without a bustling traffic, without anything that could be called business and very nearly without life. A promenade runs along the Lake shore. It is lined with the usual clipped planes and also with a superb row of standard roses. The town is composed of the "one long street" through which the pilgrims tramped and down which the tram-car now rattles. There are a few houses bearing such dates as 1580 and 1596, but beyond these figures they show small evidences of antiquity. The town itself is drab, low-spirited and purposeless, and apparently stupefied by centuries of utter dullness and by the conviction that it has no longer any place in the world.

It can claim one charm—the view that it affords of the Lake and its great mountains and of the magic valley of the Rhone. The church of St. Paul (said to have been founded in 1166) is even more uninteresting and more dreary than the town. The present building dates from the 15th and 16th centuries, affects the Gothic style, has a tower which might have some attraction were it not smothered in plaster, and a church which—as Read mildly puts it—is "sadly disfigured."

The great house of Villeneuve was that occupied by

the distinguished Bouvier family. It stood near the town gate and was (and is indeed still) the last house on the right on the road to Aigle. It was practically destroyed by the fire of May 4, 1409, which threatened to make of the town a heap of ruins. In Read's time it consisted of two parts, of a large house and a smaller one, with a tower the height of which had been reduced. It had then a fine stone doorway and narrow grated windows, and above all a cellar which Read was—for a special reason—delighted to find intact.

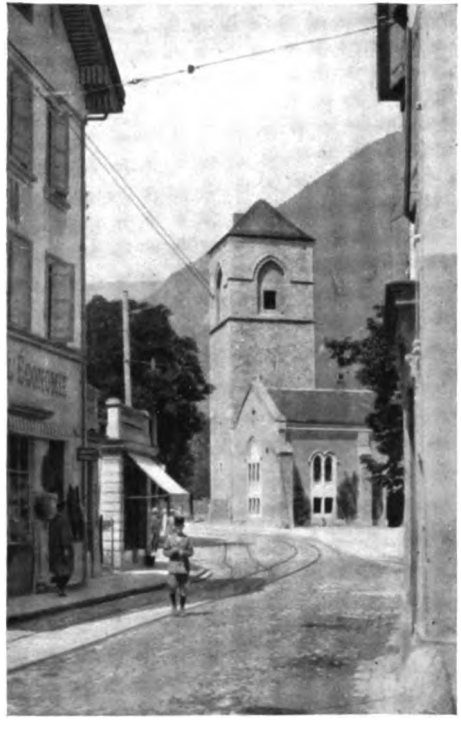
The house has been recently modernized, but the general features (of the large house and the small and the low tower) have been preserved. The stone doorway has vanished and with it probably the cellar. The story of the house, as told by Read, is as follows.[1]

In 1588 Charles Emmanuel of Savoy determined to possess himself once more of the Pays de Vaud. He collected an army of some 5,000 men at Ripaille, together with appropriate artillery, and ships to carry his forces across the Lake. He expected a good deal from the army, but still more from treachery on the part of certain notables of Lausanne, for a feature in the programme was to be a rising in that city on behalf of Savoy.

The chief conspirator in Lausanne was D'Aux, the burgomaster. He was in the habit of sailing over to Evian to discuss this precious plot with his Savoy friends. Another prominent traitor was his nephew, Ferdinand Bouvier, of Villeneuve. He was the lieutenant governor of the Castle of Chillon and at the same time warden of the hospital at Villeneuve. He was a man in the prime of life, being thirty-five.

[1] "Historic Studies in Vaud, Berne and Savoy,' by M. Read. London, 1897.

VILLENEUVE: THE BOUVIER HOUSE



VILLENEUVE: THE TOWER

The landing of the duke's army and the rising in Lausanne were arranged for a certain day in December. But no fleet came in sight and the sleepy streets of Lausanne were disturbed by nothing more sensational than a dog fight. Two things had happened. A severe gale had prevented the duke's ships from leaving Ripaille and the plot had leaked out. The latter fact was due to the practice—still in vogue—of one friend confiding to another the details of the affair "in the strictest confidence." It was passed on, in this way, from mouth to mouth until it came to the knowledge of the Bailiff of Lausanne. D'Aux was warned, also in the strictest confidence, that "things were coming out." So he bolted to St. Sulpice, where he obtained a boat that carried him to Evian.

The information reached the Bailiff of Lausanne in the following manner. The bailiff was dining with Ferdinand Bouvier at the Castle of Chillon. They were boon companions and firm friends. The dinner was, no doubt, excellent and the wine of the best. It was a jovial evening, the conversation was genial, and any boatman rowing by the castle wall would hear the laughter that re-echoed across the table.

As the two—a little red in the face, perhaps—leaned back in their chairs to enjoy the last flagon of wine a messenger entered with a letter for the bailiff. Annoyed at the interruption he opened the letter petulantly, and as he read his face became graver and graver. Looking across to his ruddy companion, he said, "My friend, it pains me to the heart, but I have orders to arrest you." Bouvier, suddenly become pale, could only say stiffly; "You must obey orders. I am at your disposal; but

allow me to go to Villeneuve under any guard you like so that I may put my affairs in order."

The bailiff consented, but the two spoke no more. One can imagine the silent room, Bouvier still sitting at the table with bent head, cowed and shamed, and his guest standing by the window and muttering over and over again, "Ferdinand a traitor!"

Bouvier and his guard marched to his house at Villeneuve. On arriving there he suggested that the men would like some refreshment and directed them to the cellar, telling his servant, no doubt, to see that they had plenty and that they had it strong. They found it so unlike the barrack wine that, in a while, they were all too drunk to have thought of either their mission or their charge. In the meantime the Governor of Chillon slipped out of the garden door and, fleeing through the night, reached Savoy in safety.

He left his wife, Marie du Crest, behind—an excellent lady to whom he had been married eight years. She was arrested, taken to Chillon, and put to the torture. By a rope attached to her wrists she was hoisted up the pillar which stood in the centre of the torture chamber while red-hot irons were applied to her feet. It was a terrible ordeal, but the gallant woman kept her teeth clenched and refused to betray the man who had left her to her fate. As nothing would induce her to speak, she was released, and returned with her poor charred feet to the now desolate house at Villeneuve.

Of all those who took part in this sorry drama, the only one who stands out as an heroic figure, among the company of traitors and cowards, is the brave and loyal Marie du Crest, who could be faithful unto death.

— C —

FROM THE RHONE TO LAUSANNE

XXVI

THE THREE TOWNS

THE Rhone Valley occupies the whole of the eastern extremity of the Lake, being bounded on either side by masterful mountains which form the walls of the stupendous outlet. One flank of these mountains is continued along the Swiss or northern shore, rising (as on the opposite coast) directly from the water's edge, but providing ground enough at their foot to accommodate the united towns of Territet, Montreux and Clarens. On one of the promontories which stand out from the mountain-side is Glion, and above it the vast white hotel of Caux; while between Territet and Villeneuve are the heights of Rochers de Naye, which attain an altitude of 6,710 feet above the sea level. At Clarens the hills drop away and there opens up a wide valley sloping gently to the Lake. It is triangular in outline, with its base on the shore, where are Vevey and La Tour de Peilz; while on one flank are the Pléiades and on the other Mont Pélerin. Far up on the floor of this broad gap in the hills is the famous Castle of Blonay.

Between Vevey and Lausanne the coast is uninteresting and forms, indeed, the dullest part of the Lake shore. It is represented by a range of low hills which is covered with vineyards, planned in stiff, monotonous

squares and rows. As Lausanne is approached the trees, the fields and a freer, kindlier country appear again, so that the lake-side ceases to be a tedious bank of chess-board patterns and cubist sketches. For some reason—based probably upon early Biblical teaching—there is an impression that a vineyard should be beautiful. It may have been so in the days of the Song of Solomon, but now, what with staking and weeding, pruning to the ground and spraying with sulphate of copper, a modern vineyard (except for a week or so in the autumn) affords but an uninspiring spectacle. Gazing upon this bank, ruled and lined like an exercise book, one fails to appreciate the rapturous declaration, "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi."

The Three Towns are very happy in their position in the great scene. Between the blue of the Lake and the blue of the sky there rise the mountains just named. They are, at this point, from 2,000 to 3,000 feet high. This range is no mere bank. Its variety is infinite, for it is thrown into folds by many a gorge and jagged by many a peak. It is green with every variant of that colour, since between the forests of holly-green firs are patches of steep down of the tint of a geranium leaf and as smooth. The mountain where it meets the Lake is fashioned into bays and capes most beautiful to see, and here the trees come down to the very pebbles of the beach.

It is along the strand of these blue coves that the Three Towns cluster. Viewed from across the water they appear as a line of bright colour, a very broken line fashioned out of tints of white and pink, of yellow and

faint blue, and punctuated by a thousand dots, which are windows, and capped by splashes of brown, which are roofs. All these details are reflected in the Lake with undiminished brilliance. The line is broken, here and there, by a clump of trees in a garden, by the spire of a church, by tall poplars, by a white balustrade and by many a glint of sun on glass. So broad is the Lake and so towering are the hills that these far-famed places, with their thousands of inhabitants, seem, at a distance, little more than a row of bright and shapely stones.

The Three Towns, in their combined attractions, form the most popular resort in this part of Switzerland. Their popularity is easy to understand. They command the finest view that the Lake affords. They face south. They are protected by the great hills from the north wind—the cynical and uncharitable *bise*. They know not the fog. They are, above all, very modern and furnish every comfort that the most fastidious can desire. They toil not, neither do they spin; but exist only to afford joy to the visitor. The visitor is, indeed, their sole commodity, their sole export and import and the object of their being.

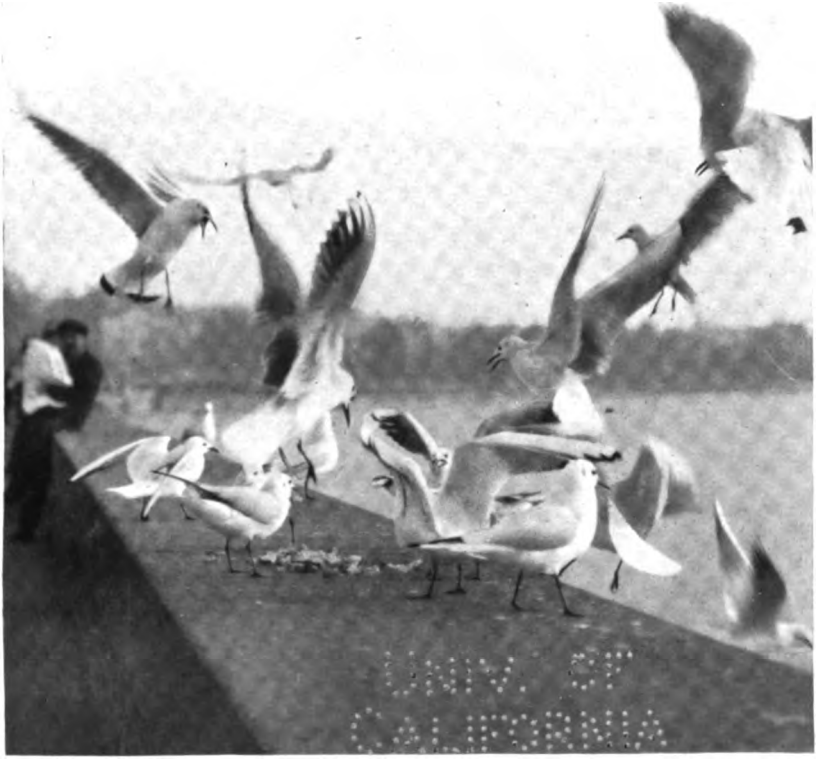
The welfare of the Three Towns depends upon the stranger within their gates. It is amazing what that individual requires. His needs are made manifest by the multitude of shops and by their complex variety, by food collected from all quarters of the earth, by theatres and casinos, by steamers to carry him on the water as well as by electric or funicular railways to drag him to the tops of mountains in order that he may enjoy a view. All this he wants to secure an appropriate delight in living. Yet the first visitors who came to Montreux—

the men of the Bronze Age—needed so little and could do so much for themselves. Given food, fire and a strong axe, they were probably as happy as the most favoured in the Three Towns are to-day. The machinery of happiness has become, in fact, extremely complicated, and the things that the pampered "cannot do without" are as the sands of the sea in multitude. Yet with this intricate machine and these things that cannot be denied the Three Towns deal with composure and success, and so the world speaks well of them.

The Towns are still in their youth, the least mature being **Territet,** which has sprung up, like a crop of brightly-tinted mushrooms, on a bank by the Lake-side. Old prints show Territet as a stretch of green meadowland with a cottage or two, some trees and an enticing footpath. **Montreux,** a town of over 22,000 inhabitants, is older. The name implies a district rather than a town, for in ancient times Montreux was a collection of hamlets scattered about the foot of the hills. It is only of recent years that the houses have spread down to the margin of the Lake. A print of 1828[1] shows this bustling and brilliant town as a mere village with a church perched high up on the slope. The domain belonged in the 11th century to the Bishops of Sion and then, in the 14th century, it was possessed by Savoy. The Count of Savoy required at that time from the curé an annual dole of four pounds of wax to be used for his comfort when he came to Chillon. As some abatement to this tax the curé was allowed to fish in the Lake in Lent.

The origin of the old church of Montreux is lost in the mists of the past, but it emerges with the dignity

[1] "Voyage pittoresque autour du Lac de Genève." Paris, 1828.



SEA-GULLS ON THE LAKE

of a parish church in 1228. It was dedicated to St. Vincent, the patron of vine dressers, and was placed by the terraces of vines, where it became a sanctuary for those who worked among the grapes. The church was built in its present form in 1507. It stands in the quarter called Les Planches, and was at one time reached by the slothful by means of a funicular railway, now extinct.

The growth of Montreux has been rapid. In 1815 it could boast only of a few rustic inns. In 1835 the first *pension* appeared—the Pension Visinand—at Sâles, now an insignificant suburb of the modern town. Then followed very timidly some small hotels. One hotel, "The Swan," boasted of no fewer than 30 beds. In 1850 the population (which had been 2,888 in 1831) rose to 3,181, and Montreux had then eight hotels or *pensions*, with a complement, between them, of 250 beds. The *Dictionnaire Historique*, from which these particulars are obtained, states that in 1854 the cost of living *en pension* at Montreux was three francs a day. This will fill the modern grandchild with envy and call forth regretful comments upon the good old days. It should be remembered that the three francs included the privilege of going to bed with a solitary candle, of washing in a small bowl of cold water and the use of a bedroom without a carpet.

Those who would see something of old Montreux should visit the suburbs of Les Planches and Sâles. They stand high up in the shadow of the mountain, and were once villages with nothing between them and the Lake but vineyards and green fields. Now the new town has climbed up to them, has infected them with some

modernity and, but for the protecting hill, would have elbowed them off the ledge to which they cling.

These two little quarters of Montreux have, however, still some independence and show even now some of their old quality. They are separated from one another by the Gorge du Chauderon, a narrow but deep cleft in the rock, at the bottom of which a stream tumbles headlong, showing flashes of silver through a cloud of trees. Les Planches has its village fountain bearing the date 1754, its old-world café with a hanging sign, and many ancient and picturesque houses which go back to such years as 1588 and 1620. One of them has quite a fine round tower, with a pointed roof and some 17th century windows. Sâles is a little less interesting, but its ways are narrow and steep and, indeed, there is a long winding stone stair which climbs from the foot of the town to its summit as if the place were a tenement house.

The old church of Montreux is just above Les Planches. It stands alone on a ledge of rock. Behind it is the precipice of Glion, which projects from the mountain-side like a gigantic altar. In front of the church is a delightful terrace shaded by trees. Beyond the terrace wall an abrupt declivity drops headlong to the fashionable town, where are the new houses, the great hotels, the kursaal, the tramways and, beyond them all, the everlasting Lake.

The church is superb and of great interest. It has been religiously preserved, is of grey stone, possesses a lofty square tower and spire, and has a belfry lit by Gothic windows. On either side of the nave are immense round pillars of oyster-grey stone. They are without

capitals and form the bases for four round arches. The arches, in turn, support a beautiful vaulted roof. The spandrels between the ribs are painted, and the whole effect is one of great charm. The choir, with its Gothic windows, is more modern, but the body of the church remains practically as it was in 1509.

At the end of the terrace and close to the church door is a curious stone building, small and square, with narrow Romanesque windows and a quite commonplace roof. Its interior will afford a surprise. It reveals an exquisite little chapel with a groined roof, the ribs of which radiate from a single round pillar in the centre of the chamber. In architectural detail the chapel follows precisely the lines of the nave of the church, and there is no doubt but that the two were built about the same period (1509). This little building was once the cemetery chapel. Here the bones of the dead were deposited and here, in 1522, the celebration of the Mass was authorized. It is now a *salle des catéchumènes* or Sunday school. This church and its chapel are without question the most beautiful objects in the whole of Montreux.

Clarens was made famous by J. J. Rousseau, for it was the home of the much-enduring Julie. A French author,[1] writing in 1846, remarks, "The greater number of the English who make gibberish of our language come here attracted by the memory of Rousseau." That fascination no longer has power and the command of the French tongue has, at the same time, improved. Clarens, although now so very modern, is an old village which can boast of the fact that Roman remains have been found in its vicinity. It was in the domain of the

[1] "Le Tour du Léman," par A. de Bougy. Paris, 1846.

Lords of Chatelard and, some time in the 14th century, was granted the privilege of possessing a mayor. Byron resided in Clarens in 1816, which fact is still kept prominently in mind. About the middle of the 18th century Clarens awoke, cast off its ancient garments, and appeared jauntily in the fashionable raiment of the day.

Above the town of Clarens is the cemetery, one of the most beautiful on the coast. It stands at the foot of the hill upon which is reared the Castle of Chatelard. The terrace in front of it commands a memorable view of Montreux. In this secluded place is the tomb of Henri Fréderic Amiel, the author of the melancholy "Journal Intime." He died in 1881 at the age of sixty (page 20). It is a disconsolate looking memorial in the form of a shrunken pyramid of grey stone with panels of chilly slate. It is shaded by an unhappy yew tree, while the grave at its foot is buried under a shroud of irreverent ivy.

XXVII

CHILLON

CHILLON is probably the best preserved mediæval castle in Europe. It is certainly the best known and assuredly, of all buildings in the world, is the one which has been the most persistently photographed, painted and sketched. It must be familiar to thousands who have never set foot in Switzerland. Its position is exceptionally picturesque. The castle of romance is generally perched on the summit of a crag. Here is a castle at the foot of a hill, with its foundations in a lake. Chillon stands on a small island of rock which is approached from the mainland by a bridge. The Lake, as it flows between the islet and the land, forms a natural moat.

In front of the castle is a stretch of bright water, while behind it is a steep mountain covered with trees from base to summit. So immense is the hill at whose foot it lies that the castle is completely dwarfed and indeed, when seen three miles away, might be but a block of carved ivory set on a sheet of enamel backed by a cushion of dark green. What adds to the charm of the position is the fact that the castle stands entirely alone. There is no building—ancient or modern—to mar its particular features or to distract the eye from its gem-like isolation.

Viewed from near at hand Chillon satisfies the imagination. It realizes to the full the feudal castle of old days, its arrogant display, its hardihood, its brutality, its elemental outlook upon life. Here are all the details that befit the scene of a mediæval romance and that furnish a background for those thrilling incidents which may happen within castle walls. Here stood the drawbridge by the ominous entry; here are the low-pitched, cavernous guard-room, with its great fireplace, and the sun-lit courtyards where the pages played at knucklebones and where the maids, as they passed, lingered to laugh with them. Here, too, are the turrets where the sentries watched, the great keep into which the country folk, half-clad and half-crazed, were hurried when the Terror was upon them, as well as the dungeons made horrible by moans and the clank of chains. Looking out upon the Lake are the great hall whose timbers have re-echoed the sounds of revelry and the shouts of armed men, the justice room, the torture chamber and the little balcony where the ladies fed the pigeons. There is no detail lacking. There are even the secret stairs cut in the walls, so essential in romance, and the postern by the water's edge which was a way of escape when all hope was lost.

There has been a stronghold at Chillon from very early days, because it held the ancient road which, at this point, was but a pass between the mountain-side and the Lake. It was not until the 18th century that the highway was widened by the cutting away of the cliff. Chillon, once the property of the Bishops of Sion, came into the possession of Savoy in the 12th century. It was the famous Count Pierre of Savoy who may be regarded

CHILLON FROM THE LAKE

CHILLON

as the builder of the castle. This turbulent and ever-restless man lived between the years 1208 and 1268. Chillon remained in the hands of Savoy until the fortress was taken by the Bernese in 1536. The last châtelain who held the castle for Savoy was Antoine de Beaufort. In January, 1798, the people of Vevey and Montreux seized Chillon and so freed it from the dominion of Berne.

Since the time of Count Pierre the castle has been, of necessity, many times remodelled or enlarged, and thus it is that it shows the work of many and varied years. The building, in its general features, belongs to a period that ranges from the early part of the 13th century to the end of the 16th.

To describe Chillon would be as complex a work as the description of the contents of an antiquary's shop. The building has been most skilfully restored, the arrangements made for the visitor are perfect, while the little leaflet giving the main features of the castle is a model of what a guide should be. The land side of the castle is commanded by three round towers which rise from the moat, are crowned by machicolations and pierced by many loopholes. In the central tower is a curiously ill-omened dungeon. On a line with these three defences is a square tower of the 13th and 14th centuries which guards the entry. In the centre of the whole mass of buildings and dominating them all is the keep, a plain, uncompromising structure of great height which is believed to date from the beginning of the 11th century.

The Lake side of the castle is represented by a rectangular block of buildings in the walls of which are

many beautiful windows. Here is the Great Hall, a magnificent apartment with four Gothic windows and a 15th century ceiling, which is supported by massive columns of chestnut wood with finely carved capitals. Another notable apartment is the Justice Room, with a ceiling of sunken squares supported by pillars of dark grey marble. Leading from it is "Room No. 15," the most dreaded room in the castle, for it was transformed into a Torture Chamber in the 17th century. It is, in point of fact, a bright and cheerful room and the one that, of all the apartments in the château, would be selected for a bedroom. It has a pretty 18th century window which looks over the Lake towards the setting sun. This view of the placid water, with its fisher-boats and its sea gulls and the open country on either side of it, must have given the first pang of pain to those who were led into this fearsome place. The walls are decorated in squares of brick-red and grey. The ceiling, upon which the eyes of the man on the rack must have rested, is as merrily painted in green, white and scarlet as a child's toy-box. It may, indeed, be a nursery ceiling.

The most horrible object in the room is a tall, lean pillar which drops from the ceiling like the body of a snake. It was by ropes attached to this pillar that the victims of "Justice" were hoisted up while hot irons were applied to their feet. The base of the pillar is browned and much worn away. The imaginative affirm that it has been charred and that it was charred by red-hot irons. The pillar has a still more horrid feature. It is rudely painted, but at the lower part the paint has been scratched away, and the idea cannot be avoided that it has been scratched off by the finger nails of the

A COURTYARD IN CHILLON

THE GREAT HALL, CHILLON

tortured. The most loathsome period in the history of this room must belong to the time when witches were hunted out and were dragged from their villages to Chillon to be tortured before they were thrown into the Lake. One can imagine some harmless old crone, toothless and grey-headed (a scold with a bitter tongue it may be) swinging with ghastly contortions from the pillar and filling the stone chamber with her ear-piercing shrieks. Early in the 19th century, writes Read, an ancient chest in the Torture Chamber was examined. It was found to be filled with musty, time-stained documents which, in the course of years, had been depleted for the making of cartridges and the lighting of fires.

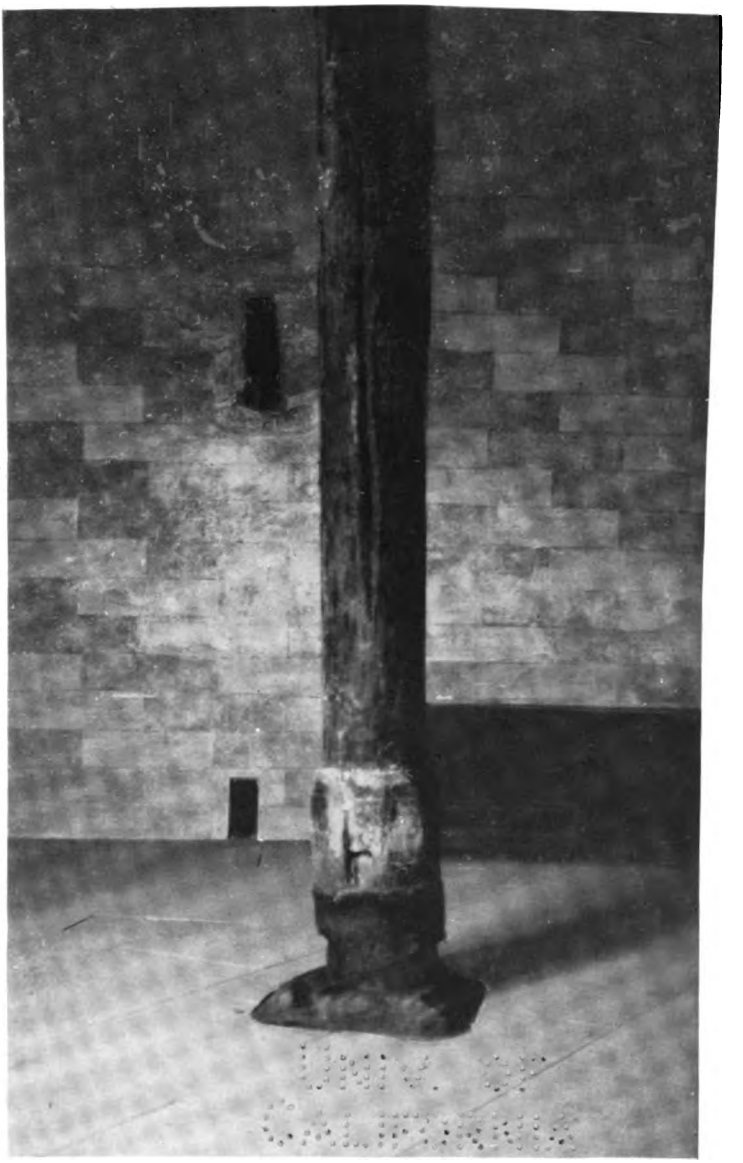
In pleasant contrast to "Room No. 15" is the exquisite little Chapel of St. George. It has a beautifully decorated Gothic roof and four very modest lancet windows. It was built in the middle of the 18th century, "to which epoch," says the leaflet, "belong the arches, bays and some of the paintings."

There are many other rooms in this rambling place, such as the Duke's bedroom, with its immense fireplace and blood-red walls, and the Duke's parlour or "retreat." There are, moreover, hollow-sounding corridors, unexpected stairs, quaint courtyards, sudden loopholes that seem to jump out at the passer-by, heavily barred windows and, on the summit of the walls, the fascinating galleries of the patrol.

Very many people have an acute—if morbid—taste for dungeons. To creep down dark steps into an undoubted *oubliette* is evidently one of the greatest joys that the visitor to Chillon experiences. The dungeons at Chillon are most satisfying to those who have this

appetite. They are hollowed out under the main building, were constructed between the years 1254 and 1264, and are just above the level of the Lake. They consist of a series of communicating vaults where will be seen the condemned cell, the execution chamber with the beam of the gallows, as well as hollow places which even a modest imagination can people with wild-eyed, crouching wretches, hugging their rags.

At the end is the main dungeon where Bonivard, *the* prisoner of Chillon, was confined. It is long, narrow and grey, and to a large extent cut out of the rock. The floor also is of rock. It has a fine vaulted roof supported by round columns. To the base of one of these pillars Bonivard was chained. The light is admitted through narrow, vertical slits which open into round-arched embrasures. The place is more like the crypt of a church than the deepest depth of a prison. Compared with the black, stifling, rat-infested dungeons of mediæval tales, with their mouldy walls dripping moisture and their cruelly pinched space, this dungeon of Bonivard is quite an *oubliette de luxe*. It is lofty, dry, well lit and well ventilated, cool in summer and by no means chilly in December. The light is good enough to read by, while those who could clamber into the window recess would obtain a view such as no modern prison could provide. The one sad note about the place is the sound of the water rippling against the base of the rock, a sound that is half sympathetic, half mocking, at one time caressing and at another maddening with despair.



THE PILLAR IN THE TORTURE CHAMBER, CHILLON

XXVIII

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

BONIVARD, the Prisoner of Chillon, has two personalities. There are the Bonivard of fact and the Bonivard of fiction. The two men are totally unlike. One is not even the shadow of the other. For the Bonivard of fiction Byron is in large measure responsible, since his famous poem has made this much pitied prisoner known the world over. Byron, in a note to the poem, confesses that "he was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonivard" when he penned the lines at the inn in Ouchy. The Bonivard of the poem is represented as a martyr to his religion, as a pious man who was thrown into a dungeon because he fought "for the God his foes denied" and because he was prepared to suffer death "for tenets he would not forsake." The Bonivard of fact did not owe his imprisonment to any tenets nor to any matter of faith. His religious views were never in question. He was confined in Chillon by the officers of Savoy because he was a fighting man they feared, because he was a danger to the State and because he had hunted down natives of Savoy and killed them whenever the occasion offered. He had, indeed, maintained for long a vendetta against Savoy, had fought Savoy tooth and nail, and, therefore, when he was captured by the enemy he was very reasonably immured in a prison.

Bonivard was a learned man according to the standard of the time, was of good family, was daring and fearless, a gallant soldier and, above all, a staunch patriot. He had two grounds for his hostility towards Savoy. In the first place, Savoy was the avowed enemy of Geneva and had proved herself to be an enemy who was both treacherous and relentless, while, in the second place, Bonivard had a grave personal grievance against the state he harassed.

This was obviously not the devout man about whom Byron wrote with so much sympathy and with such fine pathos; nor was this the man who is figured in a modern painting placed in the guard-room of the Castle of Chillon. This picture has for its scene the familiar dungeon. Seated on the floor with his back to a column is a dignified man with a calm and benevolent countenance. He is handsomely dressed in semi-academical attire. He is spotlessly clean; his moustache and beard are neatly trimmed. It only seems a pity that a man so elegantly clad should be sitting on the ground. By his side are the conventional heap of straw and pitcher of water which are inevitable in prison scenes. Attached to him, in such a way as not to disturb his carefully arranged robes, is a chain of such size that it would hold an elephant. This is the Bonivard of the poet, a noble figure, but not "the prisoner of Chillon."

The real Bonivard, on the other hand, would be represented by a fierce looking man with wild and frowsy hair, unshaven and unwashed, clad in an unclean shirt, in ragged breeches and still more ragged hose. Possibly by his side would be some fragment of paper, for Bonivard appears to have spent his solitary days in

writing verses which were not too serious, being, in fact, merely "trifling fancies and ballads."

Bonivard was born at Seyssel, near Bellegarde, in 1498. When he was 17 he succeeded his uncle as prior of St. Victor. The monastery was in Geneva, standing on the site now occupied by the Russian church. The office was a well-paid sinecure. Bonivard never took holy orders, but was concerned with the monastery solely as a layman. He seems to have been a cheery, light-hearted lad who, with a cock's feather in his cap and a sword by his side, swaggered about Geneva as one of the rollicking company who were going to beard Savoy. So troublesome did these gay conspirators become that in 1519—when Bonivard was 26—the Duke of Savoy took serious steps to put an end to their many acts of aggression. The result was that Bonivard had to fly disguised as a monk, was captured and imprisoned by the duke for two years in the Castle of Grolée.

The revenues of the monastery of St. Victor were largely derived from lands in Savoy, and thus it was that Bonivard, on his release, found himself robbed of a good deal of his estate. He then, aided by a few hired men, began a guerrilla war of his own against Savoy. He had serious reverses and ran deadly risks, but still he held on, impelled by his dashing and adventurous spirit. Nothing dismayed him; nothing damped his ardour. He would fight Savoy so long as he had breath in his body, and if none stood with him he would fight alone. Bonivard and his raids became a terror to the Savoyards. He kept the country around Geneva in a condition of alarm. Although a price was placed upon his head, his craft and courage saved him from arrest.

In 1530 Bonivard (then 37), went to Seyssel to see his mother. On the return journey through Vaud he was betrayed, was captured in a wood above Lausanne, and brought in triumph to Chillon. For the first two years in the fortress he seems to have been well treated and to have occupied a room near to that of the governor; but at the end of this time, either on account of his own misconduct or by order of the duke, he was transferred to the dungeon and chained to one of its pillars.

On March 28th, in the memorable year 1536, Chillon was taken by the Bernese and Bonivard was set free. He returned to Geneva a poor man. He was granted a small pension and was commissioned by the authorities to write a history of the city. This he did; but the work was written in so racy a style that the punctilious Calvin declined to sanction its publication. The work apparently did not see the light until 1831.

Bonivard, the chastened dare-devil, found Geneva under the rule of Calvin a dour and melancholy city. He was not infrequently in trouble. He was charged by the Town Council on one occasion with playing backgammon and with absenting himself from church and, at another time, on account of some impropriety with a serving maid.

Bonivard's chief troubles, however, were matrimonial. He had four wives after his release from prison.[1] The first one—a very worthy lady—died in 1548. The second was an elderly person who had already had two husbands. This lady he beat. He was charged before

[1] "Lake Geneva and its Literary Landmarks," by F. Gribble. London, 1901.

the Council for this treatment of his wife; but the Council dismissed the charge on the ground that Madame Bonivard well deserved the beating she got. In fact, it was the wife who was reprimanded by the bench, and not the husband with the stick. The lady, what with being beaten at home and being reprimanded abroad, seems to have taken a dislike to Geneva, for she fled from the city and the unsympathetic eyes of the world.

The third wife, Pernette Mazue, was a widow. She appears to have been negative and inconspicuous and to have escaped the tongue of gossip. The fourth wife, Catharine de Courtavone, was exceptional and a very disturbing person in the house of an aged scholar. She was a runaway nun, young and pretty. Bonivard had given her shelter out of kindness. The Council, hearing of this charitable act, regarded it as a scandal and ordered Bonivard to marry the young person. The nun was not enthusiastic about the match, while Bonivard was so opposed to it that he implored to be let off, pleading his age (he was then 69) and his infirmities. The Court insisted that the scandal could only be repaired by matrimony, so, amid sighs and groans, the marriage took place. The end was a tragedy. Three years after the wedding the wife was accused of immoral conduct with an unfrocked priest. The aged Bonivard himself did not charge her and, indeed, pleaded for her and gave evidence on her behalf. The sentence passed by puritan Geneva was terrible. The ex-priest was beheaded and the runaway nun was sewn up in a sack and thrown into the Rhone.

Bonivard died in 1570 at the age of seventy-seven.

XXIX

BARBILLE OF CHATELARD

BEHIND Clarens, on a round and very prominent hillock covered with vines, rises the Castle of Chatelard. Its position is commanding and its isolation impressive, for it stands alone, like a sentinel, in the vast opening of the valley. The château consists of a massive square building of stone capped by a high-pitched roof. A line of machicolations crowns the biscuit-yellow walls, the upper portions of which are of brick, as in the Château of Lausanne, to which Chatelard bears a close resemblance. The windows are few and have been modernized on the lines of the 18th century. The general impression conveyed by the castle is that of stern simplicity, self-confidence and immense strength. By the side of the keep is a small square tower which looks as if it had budded off from the parent building and would grow up like it in the course of time. On the north side is a low and more modern house with a round tower at its north-west corner. The outworks which once protected the castle on the hill-side have vanished, together with the enceinte wall. A trace of this wall, however, survives, together with (on the north side) the base of a tower and the head of a stair which is reputed to have once led to a subterranean passage of much mystery. The château has in recent years been

very judiciously restored by M. Marquis-Du-Bochet, in whose family it still remains. At the foot of the castle hill is the hamlet of Tavel. The name is significant, as will appear in the account which follows.

Chatelard was in its earliest days a very great possession. The domain extended from Vevey to Chillon. Some memory of its vastness still clings to it, for the present commune of Chatelard includes no fewer than 32 villages and hamlets as well as the town of Clarens. The territory, which was originally held by the Abbey of St. Maurice, came into the hands of the Bishops of Sion about the commencement of the 11th century. The history of Chatelard—a turbulent and very complex story—is admirably set forth in the *Dictionnaire Historique*. It is a story of gradual disintegration, of a loss of lands here and of a loss of rights there, of many successive owners and of quarrels and fighting. It is a story with many odd details bearing upon the eternally thorny subject of taxation. For example, the people in 1355 are found to be complaining of certain *aides* which had to be forthcoming on three special occasions. First, when the lord became a chevalier; secondly, when he made a journey across the sea, and, thirdly, when one of his daughters married. This is interesting as an early protest against compulsion in the matter (1) of subscribing to a testimonial, (2) of paying another person's travelling expenses and (3) of giving wedding presents to exalted people you do not like.

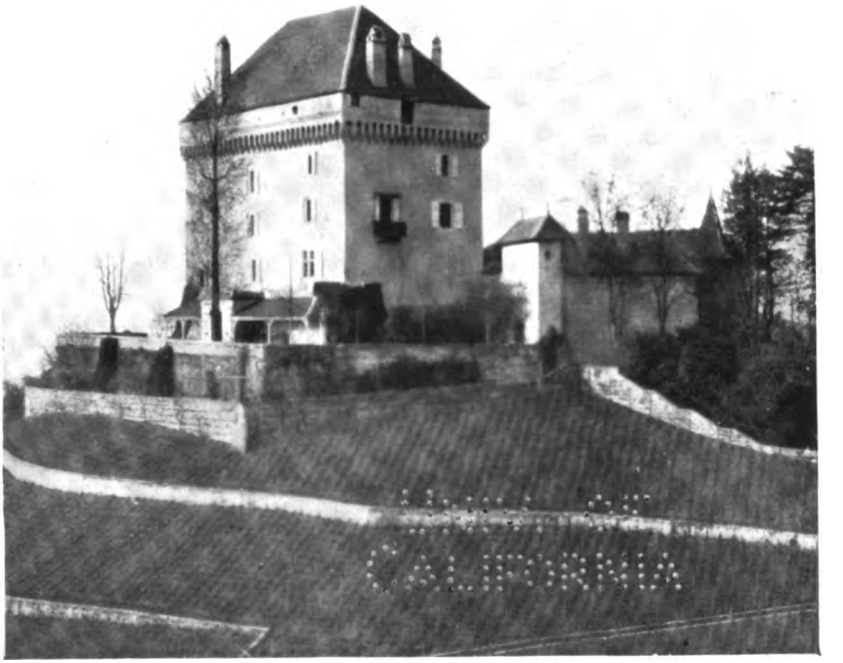
In the 18th century the Montreux portion of the domain was acquired by the Count of Savoy and the much curtailed estate of Chatelard came into the hands of the family of La Sarra. The château was built in

1440 as a stronghold and place of refuge by Jean de Gingins. He founded the barony of Chatelard, which carried with it the prerogatives of an autocratic prince. The château was taken and sacked by the Germans in 1476, but was repaired in 1502 by François de Gingins. It then passed through the hands of many holders, among whom are the Allinges of Coudrée, of which house mention is made in Chapter IX. In 1596 Chatelard was sold to Gabriel de Blonay, and in this family it remained until the end of the 17th century, when the heiress, Françoise de Blonay, married Etienne de Tavel, *banneret*[1] of Vevey, and so made the de Tavels lords of Chatelard.

The wedding was romantic, not in itself, but by reason of the fact that it led to a de Tavel becoming master of Chatelard, and in this way it served to show how discreet and judicial are the adjustments brought about by the Hand of Fate.

Some fifty years earlier Barbille Nicolaïde de Blonay, the beautiful daughter of the Lord of Chatelard, became betrothed to a de Tavel. The youth went away to the wars and was absent for so unreasonable a period that a certain Jean de Blonay (Lord of Bernex in Savoy and a remote relative of the lady) took the opportunity of making love to her. He succeeded well, so well that the two became ardently attached. Barbille's father, very properly, declined to consent to their marriage or, indeed, even to sanction their acquaintance. Thereupon Jean of Bernex hid, one winter's day, among the trees

[1] The title is derived from *bannière*, and signified originally a standard-bearer in war. Later the "bannerets" assumed the honour of knighthood, and were known as *chevaliers bannerets* or leaders of feudal troops. In the 17th century the title was purely honorary.



THE CASTLE OF CHATELARD

by Chatelard, abducted the lady according to the methods of the time, and carried her off to Savoy, where they were married on January 9th, 1642.[1] All this was in accord with the tradition and the procedure of mediæval courtship.

In due course young de Tavel returned from his protracted service at the front. He, no doubt, hurried breathlessly up the steep hill of Chatelard, in front of his men, clasping in his hot hand some rare present for his bride that was to be. At the entry there was no Barbille to welcome him with open arms, but only the old Lord of Chatelard, stuttering and vague, who blurted out in gasps that his misguided daughter had bolted off with another man and had incontinently married the same.

The returned warrior naturally became very violent, stormed and stamped and "said things" about the thieving Jean of Bernex. The family of the missing lady joined heartily in the clamour he made. The result was that between the houses of Chatelard and of Bernex there arose what—in modern parlance—would be called "a fearful row." So fearful was it that the dispute was referred, in heated terms, to the judgment of the King of France and the Duke of Savoy. As Jean and his abducted bride lived on the French side of the Lake, it is no matter of surprise that the two potentates decided in favour of the young couple and apparently considered that Jean was justified in running off with the lady.

This decision did not satisfy the de Blonays, who brought the matter before Their Excellencies of Berne. As Chatelard was on the Swiss shore of the Lake it is,

[1] Read. *Op. cit.*

again, no matter of surprise that Berne sided with Barbille's bereaved parent and with the distracted young man who had just returned from the wars. Berne, with great sternness, at once ordered Jean to report himself at Chillon.

Jean, safe in Savoy, merely laughed at this order, but Their Excellencies, who considered it no laughing matter, proceeded to pass sentence in default. The sentence was in these terms. The damsel must be at once returned to Chatelard as if she were a bundle of stolen goods. Jean must pay to de Tavel 850 double louis in compensation for the loss of his bride and for the laceration of his heart, while the old Lord of Chatelard was to be reprimanded for his negligence in allowing so pretty a girl as Barbille to bolt out of the castle on a winter's night. Failing compliance with these terms, Jean was to be arrested.

But Jean was safe in Savoy. The silly folk of Berne amused him. He supposed they could not realize how ridiculous they were. Anyhow, he defied arrest, declined to pay a single louis to de Tavel or to anyone else and, above all, declined to surrender his loyal and well-beloved Barbille.

So nothing came of all these strong and imposing actions. The storm died down, the sky was blue once more, and possibly—when the summer came—Jean and Barbille would climb the hill above Bernex and, looking across the water at the old Castle of Chatelard, would regard it as the scene of the most fortunate moment in their lives.

XXX

VEVEY

"VEVAI is a town more beautiful in its simplicity than any I have ever seen." Thus wrote Shelley in the year 1816. And even now, after the passage of a hundred years, the same can be said with assurance of the venerable town. By the side of its gorgeous neighbours, Lausanne and Montreux, Vevey retains a simplicity and modesty which is, by comparison, very becoming. It does not profess to be beautiful nor to be brilliant, but it claims to be comfortable, and in that purpose it succeeds. It is matronly rather than modish. Its outlook upon life is that of the sober middle-aged. If it lacks the boisterous enthusiasm of youth, it lacks also the listlessness of advancing years. It is what H. G. Wells would call "a nutritious town." It is much in favour with the English, who are attracted to the place because it is homely and steady, not puffed up nor given to vanity, and is possessed, moreover, of a climate that is agreeable and reasonable the whole year round.

Vevey is large, having a population of 18,644, but then it has always been a place of importance because it stands upon the highway that led from Italy into Gaul. The Romans, who were no mean judges in the selecting of sites, had a settlement at Vevey. It occupied

the eastern end of the present town, standing above the Rue du Simplon and therefore some little way from the Lake. The Burgundians, too, made much of the place, for the last of the kings of Burgundy had a palace here and, moreover, a Burgundian cemetery has been unearthed in the precincts of the town.

Vevey has seen in its time a great deal of trouble, and that is, perhaps, why it is now so subdued and serious. It stood on the boundary between two disputing powers, like a miniature Belgium, and was, therefore, the scene of violent collisions and disturbance. It was besieged or pillaged or burnt with some regularity. Consistent fighting between orthodox and properly constituted combatants it could tolerate, but it was liable to attacks from irregular bodies, made up of outcasts and scoundrels, who were very trying. For instance, in 1444 Vevey was laid waste by a most pernicious company of freebooters who called themselves *Écorcheurs* or flayers. Attacks delivered by ordinary, nicely drilled soldiers were bad enough, but an onslaught by men who made a profession of flaying people alive was horrible to a degree.

As certain children have diseases worse than others, so Vevey seems to have suffered all its misfortunes in an exaggerated form. If it had the plague, it had it very badly, and if it was flooded, it was flooded beyond all reason. If it was set alight, it burned like a bonfire, as was the case in the conflagration of 1688, when 230 houses were reduced to ashes.

Vevey has had, in succession, a number of overlords and has experienced a change of ownership which must have been most unsettling. In the 11th century the

VEVEY

Bishop of Sion possessed one part of Vevey and the Bishop of Lausanne the other, an anxious position, for bishops in those days were among the most grasping and cantankerous of men. The Counts of Savoy at one time forced themselves on the place, being very pushing land-grabbers, while at other periods the seigneur was the Lord of Blonay or the Lord of Oron or some other potentate. The lords of Blonay in the 13th and 14th centuries had, in fact, two seigniorial houses in Vevey. One—known always as *the* château—was very strong, had a high square donjon with heavy walls. It stood on the edge of the Lake on the spot now occupied by the Hôtel des Trois Couronnes. Its position serves to explain the name of the adjacent street—the Rue du Château.

A still more involved period was reached when Vevey was divided into a number of separate *bourgs*, subject to different lords. It then resembled a building made up of self-contained flats let to quarrelsome tenants. Each *bourg* had its castle, its walls and gates, its drawbridge and its moat. Each also had its chapel and its bake-house. Of such chapels Read names seven. Remains of certain of the châteaux survived even into the 18th century, at which time the boundaries of the old "quarters" were still indicated on the maps.

Vevey in the days of the old *bourgs* must have been the most picturesque town on the Lake. From the water sprang a line of walls and towers, with here and there a water gate or a little quay for boats. Within the enceinte rose the square keep of this lord or that, with around it many a turret and many a spire and many a gabled roof. The lanes, narrow and dark, would pass

between high walls and by weedy moats, by bastions and drawbridges with their beams and chains. There would be a garden or two, some simple shops with swinging signs, a cluster of fisher huts and benches where old men sat to gossip. The streets would be made bright, now and then, by the banners of knights and the gleam of their armour, by the gay jackets of the bowmen and the more gaudy liveries of the squires. Here and there, in the crowd, would be a monk in a brown frock, a court jester giggling at the maids, a singer with a lute or a boatman laden with oar and net. The quiet of the lane would be broken by the sound of chapel bells, by a chant sung in a convent, by revellers in a tavern or by a trumpet call from the vault of a guard-room.

In the 16th century, or before, Vevey was surrounded by ramparts and possessed eight gates. The walls were levelled as the town grew up, so that the last of the old defences disappeared in the 18th century. One gate, that known as the Villeneuve Gate, seems to have clung to its old position until as late as 1808, when the pickaxe and crowbar of some town improvement committee laid it low.

The houses of Vevey, although old at heart, have all been modernized, and so have lost their picturesqueness. It is of little interest to stand before a quite modern building with plate-glass windows and be told that it was once a palace of the kings of Burgundy, or to contemplate a church that might have been built a year ago and be assured that it occupies the site of a convent of St. Claire which was founded in 1422. One of the few old relics in Vevey is the statue reputed to be that of its patron saint, St. Martin. The saint stands on a

column, at the foot of which is a tinkling fountain. He is depicted in the guise of a Roman warrior. The ferocity of his features has been toned down by wind and rain, while the sun has tanned him, from helmet to buskin, an unpretentious yellow. As the protector of the city he is hardly more impressive than Han Andersen's Little Tin Soldier.

The house that was occupied by Edmund Ludlow, one of the judges of Charles I, has been long pulled down and its site covered by the Hôtel du Lac. Three of the so-called regicides came to Vevey, namely, Ludlow, Lisle (who signed the death warrant) and Broughton (who read the sentence of death). As Charles II was known to have sent emissaries throughout Europe to hunt down the murderers of his father and to compass their deaths, these three fugitives passed a life of great uneasiness. They were welcomed by the people of Vevey with effusion and were given a public reception as well as a present of wine. A tablet on the wall of the Hôtel du Lac speaks of Ludlow as "the defender of the liberties of his country" and states that he had lived at Vevey "with the sympathy of the inhabitants" from 1662 to 1698. Lisle did not feel comfortable at Vevey, so he moved to Lausanne, where he was promptly assassinated, being shot through the back in August, 1664.

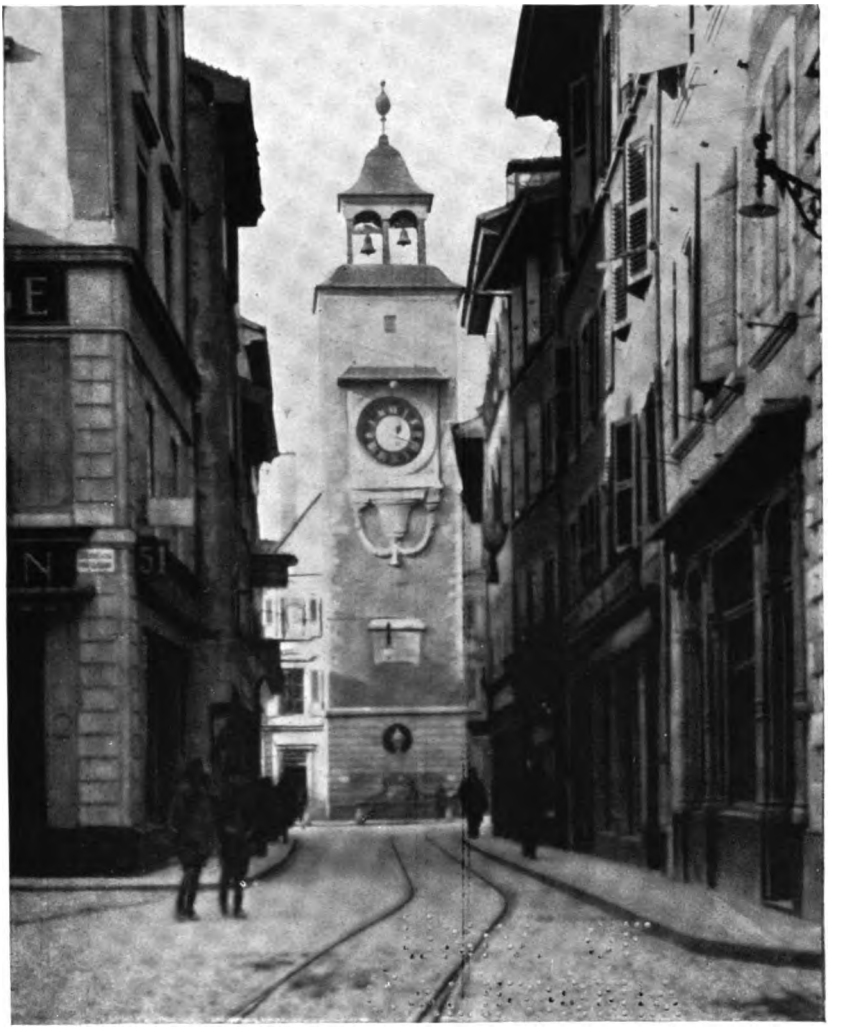
The care of Ludlow gave the authorities of Vevey considerable concern. His house was fortified and guarded. Every boat that approached the beach was viewed with suspicion. Every tramp who lurched into the town was seized and overhauled with a thoroughness which was exhausting and painful to him. Innocent

tourists who with curious eyes strolled gaping through the streets were dogged by soft-footed men and peeped at from behind corners and from dark entries. As for the "doubtful character," he was hunted like a mad dog, and was glad enough to find himself, bruised and breathless, in the hospitable dust of the high road. Ludlow's chamber was provided with a bell at the sound of which all citizens were ordered to arm and rush to the Englishman's house, seizing on the way any strangers they might chance to meet. Ludlow lived in such a state of persistent unrest that he must have suffered from what modern physicians call "anxiety neurosis." Gribble gives a very striking picture of his home life, in which he describes "Lieutenant General Edmund Ludlow anxiously searching the horizon, with one hand screening his eyes and the other gripping the bell-rope."[1] Both Ludlow and Broughton are buried at St. Martin's, Vevey, where a tablet has been erected to their memory.

The fine church of St. Martin, standing as it does on high ground above the town, forms the landmark of Vevey. Its great square tower, capped by four little turrets, can be seen for miles and from both sides of the Lake. The church is said to date from the 12th century, but was rebuilt in its present form three centuries later. Restorations and a liberal coating of cement have robbed it of much of its interest, but the grand old tower has happily escaped the hand of the spoiler.

Vevey possesses pleasant public gardens, a fine parade, a picturesque clock tower and a vast market

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 157.



A STREET IN VEVEY

square. In this Place du Marché are the house of Madame de Warens as well as the hotel, La Clef, where Rousseau stayed in 1730. The lower part of the latter building is occupied by modern shops, but the upper part has probably been but little changed in the last two hundred years.

Those in search of the picturesque should visit **Corsie**. Corsier is virtually a suburb of Vevey, but it would repudiate such association, for Corsier, although now only a village, has held a high place in the land and can boast of a history almost as distinguished as that of its more imposing neighbour. It has a wonderful church. The outside of the building is deplorable, presenting merely a cube of recent plaster pierced by modern and anomalous windows. The church within is low, plain, severe and most impressive, having the appearance rather of a crypt than of a church. It presents a nave and aisles built up of massive round arches supported upon heavy square pillars of immense size. Its age is obviously very great.

The choir is less ancient, for it pertains to the 15th century. It is in the Gothic style and has a fine vaulted roof. On this roof are some very remarkable paintings, belonging to the century just named. These archaic pictures represent the angel of St. Matthew, the lion of St. Mark, the bull of St. Luke and the eagle of St. John. The designs were brought to light when a coating of whitewash was removed from the vault in 1889. On the wall of the choir are the figures of angels in fresco, each holding a cross surrounded by a circle. The church, it is needless to say, has been made a national monument.

The village is full of old houses of much charm. Opposite to the church is a fine house—now a café—bearing the date 1592. It has a deep-sunk entry made up of a series of diminishing round arches which follow a descending stair. On the stone framework of the windows are carved a number of quaint and grotesque heads. The whole building is a pleasing specimen of its period as well as a worthy companion of the church, which was already very old when the house was built.

CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR DE PEILZ, FROM THE HARBOUR

XXXI

LA TOUR DE PEILZ

ADJOINING Vevey and now practically absorbed by it is the little town of La Tour de Peilz, once a fortified place whose castle or tower was a famous stronghold. The word Peilz, although pronounced "paix," has nothing to do with peace. In the *Dictionnaire Historique* it is surmised that it is derived from the Roman *gentilice* "Pellius." The name in 1458 was Tour de Peil.

La Tour is a very old domain that belonged to the Bishops of Sion in the 12th century and was acquired by Count Pierre of Savoy by purchase in 1255. The château dates from this period. Amadeus V, Count of Savoy, known in history as Le Grand, made his residence at the tower in the latter years of the 13th century. It was even then a fortified town with three gates.

La Tour de Peilz was one of the three great castles of the district, the others being Blonay and Chatelard. It has had a distinguished and stirring history. The *Dictionnaire Historique* gives a list of its châtelains from 1288 to 1536. These noblemen possessed at one time a wide jurisdiction which, between the years 1314 and 1370, included even the town of Vevey. The more important documents relating to La Tour have been made public by M. Naef in an interesting volume.[1]

[1] "La Tour de Peilz." Lausanne, 1892.

The gravest period in the history of the Tower was in 1476, when it was besieged by the Bernese and defended by the lord of Chatelard. Its fortifications being in poor condition, the stronghold fell after a spirited defence and was submitted to the flames. The people of the place were massacred with such brutal thoroughness that only eight escaped, and these either plunged into the Lake or got away in boats.

The château at this period had three towers, a round tower at either end (east and west) and a square tower about the centre. As a result of the siege only one tower—that on the east—was habitable, and even it was roofless. It was used for a long time as a prison, and within its walls the doors of the cells are still to be seen. In 1749 the castle was rebuilt. The two round towers were repaired, and these remain to this day. The square tower was pulled down, while the house that now exists was built on a portion of its site. At the same time the terrace by the Lake was constructed. The château of to-day forms a prominent and attractive feature of the Lake. It is occupied by Sir Horace and Lady Pinching, Lady Pinching being the representative of the old and distinguished Swiss family in whose possession the Tower has long remained. The château consists of a solid square building, with modernized windows, extending between the two old round towers, the one to the east being still without a roof. Both have been very carefully preserved. On the terrace in front of the house are stalwart Lombardy poplars, while behind is the moat, which has been incorporated in the beautiful garden of the place. By the side of the castle is the harbour, full of fishing boats and of craft with

CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR DE PEILZ

great swallow-wing sails. It affords as charming a picture of a small freshwater haven as could be imagined.

The church of La Tour, built in 1794, occupies the site of the 18th century chapel of St. Théodule. The building itself is of no interest, but the choir, which is very small and out of proportion to the nave, is believed to be a part of the ancient chapel. It has a faintly pointed roof, while the vault of the nave is round. This poor little apse has been so smothered with plaster, according to the custom of the country, that all traces of age or of architectural detail have been lost. The tower of the church, with its ingenious stone steeple, stands over the only surviving gate of La Tour. This gate, which is said to date from the second half of the 18th century, has been restored with such vigour that it might have been built within the memory of a child of thirteen.

On one side of the gate, in the Place des Anciens Fosses, is a portion of the old wall of the town. It has happily escaped "doing up," is beautiful with ivy and is a precious relic of the gallant little *bourg*.

XXXII

THE ESCAPADE OF MADAME DE WARENS

A GREAT deal has been written about Madame de Warens.[1] And yet, but for her association with Rousseau and the pretty, if hazardous, story which clings around Les Charmettes, she would have remained unknown to the world except, perhaps, for a certain dramatic episode that took place in the church of St. Mary at Evian.

The most moving adventure in this lady's life was her running away from her husband at Vevey. It was not a creditable enterprise, being, in fact, disgraceful from beginning to end; but it was carried through with such coolness, verve and ingenuity as to be a notable feat. When a woman, lacking in means, leaves her husband's home, alone and without the romantic embellishments of an elopement, the event is apt to be a little squalid and drab. It conjures up in the mind the picture of a pallid woman, sniffing hysterically and creeping on tiptoe out of a chilly house in the early hours of the morning, before the world is awake and when no one feels too cheerful. Then follow a distracted journey, a lukewarm reception at the house of an astonished friend and finally much discomfort due to remorse, to a scarcity of underclothing and a superfluity

[1] Read's account ("Historic Studies in Vaud," etc.) is one of the most detailed.

of advice. And yet, in most cases, the poor woman has some justification for her act.

Now, Madame de Warens had no means of her own and no justification for her conduct, and yet she carried out her *coup* without the least squalor, without any scarcity of clothing, without remorse and without the tiresome importunities of moralizing friends. She, indeed, absconded in great comfort and accomplished with *flair* what may be termed a running-away *de luxe*. The details of the adventure are as follows.

Françoise Louise de la Tour, the daughter of a family of position, was born at Vevey in March, 1699. She married on September 22nd, 1713, Sebastian de Löys, son of the seigneur of Warens. He was twenty-five at the time and she fourteen. She was married from school, and the bridegroom on the occasion paid her debts, which—for a child—were not negligible. As a schoolgirl she must have been rather alarming, for she was far in advance of her times. She was precocious and wrote letters which, for solemnity and precision of language, would have done credit to a woman of sixty.

The young couple settled in Vevey, in a house still standing in the Place du Marché, where Madame de Warens—aged 14—set at once to work to "have a good time." She succeeded. She was fond of pleasure, of change, of excitement and of cheerful society. Her time was soon occupied with parties and picnics, with receptions, with excursions on the Lake and jaunts in the woods. She had a little country house, called Le Basset, just above Clarens, and there in the summer many weeks were spent.

As her husband's income was limited, Françoise

Louise began to find herself with inadequate funds for her pleasures. She began to find life dull and to be haunted by the spectre of boredom. She had little to do in her home, for she had no children. In order to make money the ingenious lady started a stocking factory at Vevey to produce silk stockings. Unfortunately the people of Vaud did not wear silk stockings, so the business did not prosper.

Now comes the year 1726. The lady was then twenty-seven. She was of middle height, round and plump, with fair hair, blue eyes, a dimpled chin and a very pretty mouth. That she was fascinating, vivacious, emotional and impulsive may be gathered. The husband at this time was thirty-eight. He was a poor creature, dull, stolid and matter-of-fact, who did his duty according to his lights, was unsuspecting and, above all, a ponderous bore. He could claim—as he did claim—that he was eminently respectable, but he was the last husband who would ever have satisfied Mademoiselle de la Tour. It must, at the same time, be remembered that a rigid form of Protestantism ruled in Vaud at this period and that it failed to give full scope to Madame de Warens' conception of the "joy of living."

The scheme that she concocted in her busy brain was on no petty lines. She was to be rid of Vevey, of her stupid husband, of her dour friends, of her debts and her bankrupt stocking factory. She was to have freedom, money, a complete change, every worldly comfort and a good social position. It was an ambitious programme, but the lady—incredible as it may seem—carried it through to the letter.

In the autumn of 1725 she started on an exploring

expedition. She went to Aix "on account of some pains" and visited, in the course of her quest, Geneva, Chambéry and other places. Savoy pleased her; so that, after due investigation, it was to Savoy that she resolved to come. In the summer of 1726 she persuaded a doctor to advise her to take the waters at Evian for the relief of the same "pains." Her dolt of a husband, of course, agreed. She got together some money, ordered a brigantine for her journey and proceeded to put her luggage on board. The landing place was close to the house. M. de Warens, in a letter, says "she always took with her a great deal of luggage." Certainly on this occasion she did. She took all her clothes to the last ribbon and all her jewellery. She also took the entire contents of the plate closet, leaving for her husband's use some old spoons and forks and an antique salt-cellar. She took all the kitchen utensils she could, all the best linen and coverlets and even the mattresses, together with odd pieces of furniture. Her husband was, of course, ignorant of this compendious outfit, which was certainly excessive for a three weeks' stay at a spa.

He was out for the day when she was busy with her packing and also out for supper the same evening. When he returned he found her shut up in her room and still packing. She advised him (through the locked door) to go to bed. At the unreasonable hour of 2 A.M. she knocked him up to say good-bye. Being a dutiful husband, he accompanied her to the boat in his dressing-gown. She took her own maid with her. On parting she solemnly handed to her husband—as every good housewife should do—the key of the plate closet, which she said she had carefully locked. She did not inform

him that she had carefully emptied it before she turned the key. He, no doubt, expressed a kindly hope that her "pains" would be mitigated by the taking of the waters. The amazing lady set sail for Evian on the morning of July 18th, 1726, with a smile of supreme satisfaction on her face.

M. de Warens, still deluded and still dutiful, went over to Evian to see his lady on August 4th. She was most agreeable, but at once asked him to send her a certain "beautiful cane with a golden head" for her use in walking when she went to the spa. She begged him also to forward Bayle's "Historical and Critical Dictionary" in five volumes. She was not taking the waters nor was she reading dictionaries, but both the cane and the books meant money, and she was determined to get all she could. She seems to have had just one twinge of conscience at the last, for when she bade the silly man adieu she said, with a sigh, "My poor husband, what will become of you?" He left Evian the same day. On reaching Vevey de Warens the deluded sent her his gold-headed cane and the learned volumes by a special messenger. Had he stayed in Evian a little longer he might have heard a great deal, for much had happened between the time of her departure from Vevey and his dutiful visit.

Madame de Warens was aware that to live in comfort in Savoy she must become a Catholic and, further, she was aware that she must get money. Now a convert in Savoy was at that moment an asset of importance, and if the convert chanced to be the wife of a nobleman in Protestant Vaud a person of great spiritual value. Françoise, therefore, had resolved to join the Church

of Rome, and the next thing was to make money out of her conversion. She had already a plan worked out in her busy brain. The fact that she left Vevey on July 18th was not an accident, for she knew that on July 14th the Duke of Savoy (Victor Amadeus II) would be at Evian, and would attend the parish church in company with the bishop. Here was her chance. She went to the church of St. Mary and took her place just inside the door.

What followed may be given in the words of M. de Conzié, who was a member of the duke's suite. The duke was staying at the de Blonay château at Evian with the son of that Madame de Blonay who had been buried alive at St. Paul, as has been recorded in Chapter XVIII. M. de Conzié writes:

"The Prince went to Mass in the parochial church accompanied simply by some seigneurs of his court, among whom was the Bishop of Annecy. Scarcely had the duke entered the church when Madame de Warens seized the prelate by his cassock and threw herself at his feet, saying 'In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.' The bishop stopped, and aiding her to rise, talked five or six minutes with this young penitent, who from thence went directly to the lodgings of the prelate; and as soon as Mass was finished he joined her there." [1]

The result of this carefully-planned dramatic performance was a presentation to the duke, a pension of 1,000 livres a year from that prince and an additional income of 1,000 livres a year from the Bishops of Annecy and Maurienne.[1] The fortunes of Françoise Louise—aged 27—were made.

[1] Quoted by Read, *op. cit.*

[2] The joint sum would be equivalent to about £80 per annum, a goodly income in those times.

There was just one thing more. She was to go to a convent at Annecy and she wanted to leave Evian in style. So she told a dire story of a possible pursuit by infuriated relatives, and was therefore conducted to Annecy by an armed escort provided by the duke. The lady seems to have started for Annecy just after the visit of her husband on August 4th.

The messenger whom M. de Warens had sent to Evian with the gold cane and the dictionary came back on August 7th and, meeting his master in the road, bluntly exclaimed, "Monsieur, you have no more a wife! She left Evian this morning to follow the duke to Turin." The information was not quite exact, but it was enough for de Warens, who at once bolted home and rushed up to the plate closet. He found it empty. He then threw open his wife's wardrobes. They also were empty but for a few rags. He immediately took horse and galloped to Geneva, not to regain his wife, but in the hope of retrieving some of his stolen property. He failed totally.

In a little while he received a nice chatty letter from the astounding lady, written from Annecy, giving all her news and suggesting that he should become a Catholic and should pay her a visit in her new home. He went to see her as she proposed. She took care that the interview was well staged. He saw her in bed. She wept picturesquely and begged very prettily to be forgiven. He stayed at the inn, but they had breakfast and dinner together. She talked mostly about religion, but he had not come to Annecy to discuss points of doctrine, but to discuss the stocking factory, because, as she had become a Catholic, her property in Vevey

(such as it was) would be sequestrated to the State. She signed such documents as he wished, with the result that in due course the bankrupt factory became his own. He was throughout this crisis a great deal more anxious to save something out of the wreck than to secure possession of this fluttering, theatrical young woman. He writes in a letter to a friend: "As I quitted her she was seized with a sort of faintness which was so short that it convinced me she was a veritable comedian."

She had just a few moments of uneasiness, however, for long after the Evian exploit she wrote to M. de Conzié:

"My dear friend, will you believe me when I tell you that for two years after my abjuration of Protestantism I never went to bed without feeling a kind of goose flesh all over my body, resulting from the perplexity into which I was plunged."

A divorce for "malicious desertion" was declared on February 24th, 1727.[1]

In 1728 Madame de Warens met with Rousseau, then a lad of sixteen. About 1736 she took the pretty house, Les Charmettes, just outside Chambéry. The poor lady died in the town of Chambéry, in destitution and obscurity, at the age of sixty-three. Her place of burial is unknown. Her husband predeceased her by eight years. Rousseau's treatment of this kind-hearted if erring woman was such as to justify the opinion that "in the long range of historical personages whom the centuries present to us there is perhaps no more repulsive figure than that of J. J. Rousseau as a human being.

[1] "Madame de Warens" (*Mémoires, etc., de la Suisse Romande*); par A. de Montet. *Tome* iii. 1890.

He is absolutely disgusting."[1] The only plea that could be urged on his behalf is that he was undoubtedly of unsound mind.

The house that Madame de Warens occupied in Vevey is in the north-east corner of the Place du Marché and is now known as the Maison Nicole. It is rather hidden from view by a row of new shops. It is a pretty house of two stories, has a fine roof and is composed of a central part with a wing on either side. The windows are modern. The entrance is approached by a double flight of steps, and down these very steps the smiling lady, with her pockets stuffed with household loot, must have tripped when she was on her way to the boat and was leaving Vevey for ever. Her country house, Le Basset, was demolished in 1889. Photographs of it show a small rustic house among the vineyards, very simple, but made attractive by quaint windows and a long covered balcony on the upper floor.

[1] Read. *Op. cit*, vol. 2, p. 116.

XXXIII

BLONAY CASTLE

A BROAD valley, breaking its way through the far hills, rolls down to the Lake at Vevey. High up on the floor of this league-wide slope stands the Castle of Blonay. Its position is superb. It stands alone on an isolated mound, the one dominant feature of the landscape. So it has stood for over seven hundred years. It is surrounded by a green, contented country of homely meadows and slumbering, shadowy woods. Towering above it are the massive heights of Les Pléiades, which form the eastern wall of the valley.

The castle realizes to the full the romance with which it has been surrounded for so many centuries. It is most impressive when viewed from the lower stretches of the valley on a grey day—a November afternoon, let it be, about the time of the setting of the sun. The castle then stands up against the background of mist as a thing of enchantment. Its height appears enormous. It is white and spectral-looking, a vast mysterious presence rather than a fabric of solid stone.

As a writer in the *Dictionnaire Historique* says, the family of Blonay is "one of the most important and probably the most ancient in the Pays de Vaud." In these days of change it is impossible to contemplate without a sense of awe a house which has been in the

occupation of one family for seven hundred years, and is still held by the descendants of that Othon de Blonay who led his rough men-at-arms into this quiet valley about the year 1000. There was just one break in the centuries, when Blonay and its castle were ceded in 1752 to Rodolphe de Graffenried; but the domain returned again to the ancient family in 1806.

The history of the Blonays provides a moving and picturesque story. Among the lords of the castle have been heroic men whose deeds are almost mythical, Crusaders bearing the banner of the Cross, men who have fought beyond the seas, knights whose lances have gained glory in the lists, grey-headed men of affairs and young bloods who have made the country ring with their gallantries. Still throughout the ages their trenchant motto has been upheld—"*Purs comme l'Or, prompts comme l'Éclair.*"

Many must have been the revels within the walls of Blonay, many the feasts and many the bridal gatherings. One trivial record throws a pretty light on some of the doings at the château. It appears that in the 16th century there was a tournament at the Court of Savoy between bachelors and married men. Simon de Blonay, as champion of the married, beat the Sieur of Corsant, who carried the pennon of the bachelors. As the result of his defeat the Lord of Corsant had need to go to Blonay to cry mercy of the Dame de Blonay. The lady was more than merciful, for the defeated champion was lavishly entertained and made much of. Among the company there chanced to be the beautiful Yolande de la Villette. By her bright eyes de Corsant was once more vanquished and brought helpless to the

BLONAY CASTLE

ground. Once again he cried mercy and with such effect that Yolande became the châtelaine of Corsant, while the bachelors lost a gallant member of their company.

The castle was built in 1175 by Pierre de Blonay, from which time dates the great central tower or keep, which is still the prominent feature of the château. Blonay has of necessity undergone many changes in the course of its long life. It has been remodelled and added to from time to time, and yet it is claimed that it retains to the present day its original outline. The most extensive changes in the building appear to have been carried out in the 15th century as a natural result of the introduction of firearms. It was originally flanked by four towers, of which now only two remain.

The Château of Blonay is less impressive when viewed near at hand. It stands, as already stated, on a very steep isolated mound covered with grass. It takes the form of an immense rectangular building with modernized windows. It is ashen-white in colour and is surmounted by a chestnut-brown roof. In general appearance it has the aspect of a vast, rambling, scarcely habitable place, very old, very desolate looking and chilled, it would seem, to its inmost walls by the winters and bleak winds of centuries. In the centre is the great keep, a square, stolid mass, still very sturdy in spite of its burden of years. It has a high-pitched roof covered with slate-coloured tiles, while just below the eaves is a series of rectangular embrasures which date from the 15th century. The building on the steeper side (that facing the Lake) is supported by three immense buttresses. High up on the wall on the east flank is a

very beautiful little turret, with a machicolated gallery, perched up near the roof like a dovecot.

The entrance is gloomy. The main gate, with its rounded arch of the 16th century and its heavy sullen door, is surmounted by a gallery with machicolations, and has by its side windows barred with forbidding iron. Within is a 15th century chapel which has been converted into a muniment-room. It still retains its altar and its *bénitier*, and is still lit by a window which bears the date 1577.

Almost at the foot of Blonay is the pleasant village of **La Chiésaz** with its rare old church—rare not because its annals go back to 1228, nor because it has been restored with exceptional skill, but rare on account of its remarkable ceiling and the fact that it possesses two perfectly distinct choirs. The beautiful square tower of the church was erected in 1523, while the main walls of the building belong to the 14th century. The interior presents a spacious nave without aisles. The roof is of painted wood. It takes the form of a wide vault shaped like the hull of a vast ship inverted. It is, moreover, ribbed longitudinally in a manner which strongly suggests the planks of a ship. The summit of the arch might be the keel as it would appear from the inside. Furthermore, there hang from this dome certain lanterns which curiously resemble the stern lights of ancient ships. The comparison goes no farther, for the whole arch is painted a deep blue to represent the vault of heaven and is spangled, from horizon to zenith, with stars. It is the sky of a night in summer and, indeed, the worshipper on such an evening might imagine the church to be roofless and that he sat beneath the

BLONAY CASTLE: THE MAIN GATE

stars and could feel the breeze sweeping up from the Lake.

The two choirs are side by side but are separated by a very massive wall. Through the thickness of the masonry a passage has been cut which leads from one choir to the other. They both belong to the 13th century. The south choir contained, in ancient days, the high altar. It has three lancet windows arranged in a pyramid and is—taken as a whole—a perfect specimen of its period. Here lie buried members of the Cojonay family, as is recorded on a stone bearing their blazon of the three birds. The north choir is of the same date, but its two large pointed lights were introduced in the 16th century. On the north wall is a very beautiful little 14th century window of particular charm. This choir was a chapel of St. George, which was founded by Aymmonet de Blonay and his wife, Marguerite d'Oron, about the middle of the 14th century. It must be to this pious couple that we owe the exquisite little window in the chapel wall. Marguerite deserted Blonay, for after the death of Aymmonet she had two other husbands, the third being Jean, Count of Gruyère, who seems to have persuaded her to transfer her share of the domain to Amadeus VI of Savoy. On the vault of this choir is still to be seen, in faint colour, the golden lion of the great house of Blonay.

The village of La Chiésaz is made up of ancient houses, some of which are so curious that it would seem as if they had been designed for the sole purpose of being picturesque. The outer walls of many of the cottages display designs in black and white, illustrating village scenes and depicting village characters. Some of

the figures are life-size, some are smaller. All are realistic and delightful in their vivacity and good spirits. They are the work of M. Béguin, an artist of note who was a native of La Chiésaz. They appear to have been painted about thirty-five years ago. The practice of using the outside walls of houses as leaves of a sketch-book is probably only to be observed at La Chiésaz. The result is so remarkable that the village is generally known as *Le Village illustré*.

XXXIV

GRUYÈRES

IT will be remembered that when Counsellor Knapp put on the Goloshes of Fortune, in mistake for his own, he found himself (as Hans Andersen tells us) carried back three hundred years and stumbling through a town which was strange and unreal. Now, without the help of magic shoes, there is to be found, among the hills of Fribourg, a town which is curious and improbable and which will carry those who come to it—be they counsellors or common men—far back into the past. The name of the town is Gruyères.[1] It is a remote, shy place which would fain be left in peace. Its people are almost as isolated as are dwellers on an island and still speak, among themselves, a Romanic dialect called *Gruérien*.

The scene amidst which the town is set is such as best becomes it. It lies in a country of its own which was once a little kingdom, independent, self-contained and strong. Of this country of Gruyère it was the capital, while within its walls was the court of its autocratic prince. It was precisely such a country, such a town and such a prince as figure in the simplest fairy tale. To realize the landscape it is necessary to conceive a wide plain of meadow land, as green as the sky is blue,

[1] It is reached most readily from Vevey or Montreux by electric railway.

a plain which is traversed by a stream, is dotted by a cottage or two and occupied by many cows. Around this arena—as if it were the wall of a vast colosseum—is a circle of mountains which enclose it and hide it from the world.

In the expanse itself is a solitary hill, long, narrow and steep and shaped like a whale. On the summit of this hill is the town. Seen from afar it is a compact, clean-cut little place, so raised above the plain as to overlook it from end to end. It seems at first to be merely a pack of white walls on the top of a green bank. The walls have dots for windows, and for roofs a litter —it would seem—of brown autumn leaves dropped by the wind.

The town is surrounded by a prim wall, within which the houses are herded like white sheep in a pen. This wall has battlements on its crest, and at its foot a gate which appears as a black gap from which a grey path trails down the slope. On the highest point of the hill is a massive castle of great age, crowned by a high-pitched roof and flanked by a round tower. Near by the château can be seen the spire of a church. Gruyères, even when viewed from a distance, is more like a town in a story-book than a place to be found in a telephone directory.

It becomes almost a question how a town so distinctive should be most fitly approached. To walk up the hill, staff in hand, would clearly be appropriate. It would be proper also to ride up, provided that the lady—if there be a lady—rode pillion. As to vehicles, a cabriolet or a one-horse chaise would appear to be in keeping, but to visit Gruyères in a motor car would be an outrage.

One might as well burst into the Garden of Eden on an aeroplane.

As the proposed one-horse chaise crawls up to the town there is nothing to be seen that is noteworthy, nothing but the white road and a hill-side covered with grass. On reaching the summit the chaise will stop, the traveller will alight, and will find himself suddenly in the midst of Gruyères. The town is revealed so abruptly that the hill road might have opened upon the stage of a theatre with a set scene showing a street in an unusual town. In front of the traveller is an open space with houses crowding on either side of it. It is a space of modest size and yet it reaches from one end of the town to the other, for Gruyères is very small, so small that the whole of it is seen at a glance. The *place* is paved with cobble-stones, between which much grass is growing. It is called simply "The Street," for there is no other street in the town. Yet it is not exactly a street. It has no pavement and no apparent outlet. Moreover, it is not level as most streets are. In fact, it slopes down at once to a dip where are a fountain and women washing clothes. It then mounts up, as if from a river-bed, and comes to an end before a figure of Christ on the Cross. The figure is life-size, is brilliantly painted, and is sheltered by a penthouse which throws a solemn shadow across the face. Beyond the Cross, on one side, is a little company of houses which appear to be elbowing one another and peeping over one another's shoulders in their effort to look down The Street; while, on the other side, is a path which leads to the castle. Beyond the castle and the inquisitive houses are the sky

and a distant mountain capped with snow. Thus it is that The Street represents the beginning and the end of Gruyères. In fact, it is Gruyères.

The view of the castle from the entry to Gruyères is enchanting. There is little more than the round tower to be seen, but it is so burly, so like a great giant and yet so very old and kindly-looking that the little town lies at its feet with the contentment of a dog. Owing to the oddness of the houses that form The Street and to the general unreality of the place it would be no surprise if one suddenly heard (as did Counsellor Knapp in his own queer city) the sound of drums and fifes and saw coming down the lane from the castle a troop of drummers beating their drums, followed by a body of men-at-arms with crossbows and spears, and then, on a large horse, a prince in armour with a plume in his helmet, attended by pages upon whose slashed doublets was embroidered in silver the wide-winged crane or *Grue*—the emblem of Gruyères.

Those who wear the Goloshes of Fortune would see that procession without doubt and stranger things besides; but to those who are normally shod there is still "La Rue," which is assuredly strange enough. It is a quiet street because, but for the women washing at the spring and two boys who are trickling marbles between the cobble-stones, there are few signs of life. A red-faced girl is chasing some fowls out of a mediæval cellar; but the excitement is only momentary. An old woman is seated on a bench in the sun busy with her knitting, while on another bench two aged men are reading from the same newspaper, the date of which journal one would suppose to be about 1621.

The houses are not only old but curious. Many have fine ogee windows as well as handsome stone doorways. Over the round arches of these entries will be such dates as 1548, 1591 or 1594, together with a piece of carving which as often as not takes the form of the strutting *Grue*. There is an ancient house with a mediæval shop. The shop is just a rounded arch closed by the original three-fold shutter and provided with a stone slab for the counter. The house has windows which would not demean an old-world manor house. There is an inn, too, called the "Fleur de Lys." It is a comfortable inn but rather modern, being, indeed, almost an upstart in the place, since it is not yet three hundred years old, as the date (1658) over the door attests. Gargoyles seem to have been, at one time, fashionable in Gruyères, as was also the custom of decorating a house with fantastic carving, the work apparently of light-hearted men who worked for the fun of the thing and were fond of making jokes in stone.

The most delightful house in Gruyères is known as "La Chalamala." It stands in La Rue, there being no other place for it. It is small, possessing two stories and a garret. The door is approached by a flight of white steps which are picturesquely askew. It is just such a door as would be found in a 14th century convent. The windows, however, are the glory of the house. The stone framework of each is wondrously and profusely carved with great cunning and invention. There is an overhanging roof with a water-pipe which ends in a dragon's head. The head is very fierce, is rather violent in colour, has teeth like a saw and a gaping mouth that is alarmingly red. From the lips of

the reptile the water pours down upon the cobblestones when rain falls in Gruyères.

The name of the house is of interest. Gérard Chalamala was a jester at the Court of the Count of Gruyère. All that is known about him is contained in his last will and testament, which he signed on the 25th day of May in the year 1349. The document is preserved among the archives of the town. M. Diricq, in his charming little history of Gruyères[1] reproduces it word for word, merely changing the Latin of the text into modern French. A will gives little scope for the display of humour, so it is impossible, from this ancient writing, to form any idea of Chalamala's gifts as a comedian. From the document, however, many things are to be learned. In the first place it is clear that the jester was rich and, in the second place, that he was deeply religious. He left legacies to various pious institutions, including one cow to La Chartreuse of Oron and another cow to the Abbey of Marsens. It is to be gathered from this testament that Chalamala was of a serious and melancholic disposition, as are so many professional humorists. Furthermore, it appears that he belonged to a family of jesters, for his brother Michel is described as a *mime*, while his daughter Jordane was married to a "fool."

When this family party of funny men gathered together at Christmas the meeting must have been depressing and restrained, since they must have shunned the talking of "shop," have avoided clowning and thrown aside all apeing of the professional manner.

[1] "Gruyères en Gruyère," par Edouard Diricq. Lausanne, 1921. With a beautiful water-colour of La Rue by Colonel Goff.

One can imagine Jordane, the daughter, imploring her husband Girard not to try to be funny at the dinner table and to keep his hands off the sausages and such-like tempting missiles. The testator mentions his house, but it is impossible to identify it with the dainty, fantastic little building which now goes by his name. The only comic feature about the dwelling is the dragon-headed water-pipe which pours down water on the head of the passer-by.

Opposite this house and by the side of The Street is a most extraordinary object. It consists of a huge block, bench or table of solid stone. In this stone, chiselled out of the very rock, are five deep round basins. They differ in size and capacity. At the bottom of each is a round vent which opens upon the side of the wall above which the block is placed. These cavities suggest rock-hewn wash-hand basins of great depth, but it is hard to understand why one is so large and one so small, unless the latter be intended for a child. A wearer of Counsellor Knapp's goloshes might consider that they belonged to some colossal game of bagatelle played by giants or to some still more unearthly game of chance. They are, however, nothing of the kind. They are the ancient *Mesures* in which the peasants measured their corn on market days. When the rock basin was filled the buyer drew off the grain in a sack through the vent on the face of the wall. Even to-day this method of transacting business would appear to have some practical merit.

Photographs give no effective idea of the beauty of Gruyères. They should, indeed, be avoided, as conveying an inadequate impression of the place, since one

great charm of La Rue is its wonderful colouring. The houses are mostly white or a hazy blue. The overhanging roofs, which cast such quaint shadows on the walls, are a ruddy brown. The roadway blends the lilac-grey of the cobble-stones with the green of grass, and will be lit by a spark of brighter colour as a woman with a red cape crosses in the sun. On almost every window-sill is a box of scarlet geraniums, while creepers and climbing roses find a place on many a stretch of ancient masonry. Sun-shutters are *en règle* in Gruyères, and are lavish in their colouring. At a point or two in the street are dark green fir trees or an aromatic pile of winter wood, the logs of which are russet or biscuit-yellow or silver-grey. In front of almost every house is a bright green bench behind a row of shrubs in pots or a bank of flowers. This bench so enclosed forms the open-air sitting-room of the home, for here the gossips gather while the children play, and here the man from the fields smokes his *caporal* after his work is done. All that is needed to complete the magic of the place is the sound of a spinning-wheel.

The castle dates from the 11th century, but has been more than once rebuilt. In its general features it must look to-day very much as it has looked for the last four hundred years. The church is of little interest. It has been restored on the lines of a church in a new industrial suburb. It is all that Gruyères is not.

The town wall has much attraction, especially for boys playing at soldiers. It has an ineffectual tower here and there and boasts of battlements, each gap in which gives a little framed picture of the glorious green country around. The patrol path on its summit is pro-

tected by a running roof which shielded the city guard from the sun in summer and from the snow in winter. This much-trodden path is so little changed that, when the shadow of the evening falls, it is easy to picture the last of the old night watchmen disappearing round the corner with his heavy cloak, his lantern and his pike.

The gates of the town have, like all old gates in walled places, a fine air of romance about them. The chief gate is the Porte du Belluard. It was the state entry into Gruyères. It has a pointed arch, over which is a small mysterious gallery with one tiny window to watch the road and a line of machicolations with which to terrify the intruder. Over the entry is a painting in brave colours in which great justice is done to the strutting *Grue*. Through this gate must have poured many a brilliant and beribboned cavalcade when the count went forth to the wars or when he was making a visit in state to the Castle of Blonay or the city of Aubonne.

There is another gate which has quite a different attraction. It was a sally port or little used postern, a way of escape which would be called in the theatre world "an emergency exit." It is a mere hole in the town wall, wide enough to allow a cow to pass. It leads out directly upon the grass slope of the hill, so that it is just one step from the inside of the town to the green and quiet country. One can imagine the melancholy Chalamala stealing out of this gate alone to sit on the hill-side, where—disturbed only by the tinkle of the cow-bells—he could invent fresh funniments to be retailed while the count sat at supper, or practise fresh grimaces before a little piece of looking-glass.

XXXV

ON THE ROAD TO LAUSANNE

A WHITE level road, hot and dazzling in the summer, runs from Vevey to Lausanne, a distance of 12½ miles. It has on one side the Lake and on the other the vineyards, with here and there a garden of roses, a villa or a little town. The first place met with on the way is the fascinating village of **St. Saphorin.** It is small, since it can number only 400 inhabitants, and yet it has been a place of importance in its day, for the Romans had some kind of station here, while in mediæval times St. Saphorin was of good repute and held itself in no small esteem. It has been the seat of a noble family, for there is a record of a knight with the musical name of Guy de St. Saphorin as far back as the year 1187. The "Court General" of St. Saphorin drawn up in 1424 mentions a mayor and other officials, while frequent allusion is made to the aristocratic Château of Glérolles with which St. Saphorin was honourably associated.

The little town, although not entirely fortified, was a *bourg fermé;* that is to say, it had a wall on its more exposed front, where it faced the Lake, while on the other side it trusted to the cliff against which it stands. There were two gates to the tiny place, one on the west and one on the east. The old narrow road from

ST. SAPHORIN: THE ENTRY

GLÉROLLES, SHOWING A BACKGROUND OF VINEYARDS

Lausanne crept in at the west gate, climbed up to the church and then dropped down again to the eastern gate, as if it were a passage over the hump of a camel. The road—the old road—follows perversely the same course still.

St. Saphorin viewed from the Lake is a very pert place. Piled up on the side of a cliff it looks like a clump of creepers, with great brown leaves, climbing up the face of a rock. It should be entered from the Vevey side, not by the new road, which is commonplace, but by the old. This old road is narrow and steep and has other peculiarities. It passes by a pointed archway through the ancient wall of the town, a wall of which a considerable portion still exists. The road, as it mounts upwards, creeps under two other archways. By the side of the first of these is a house with fine ogee windows, while by the side of the other is the stump of a pentagonal tower with its original loopholes. St. Saphorin, therefore, was guarded well.

The *place*, or *piazza*, or central square of St. Saphorin, to which the road leads, is a very curious and pretty place. It is about the size of a modest drawing-room and is shaded by two fine trees, a Lombardy poplar and a chestnut, which are almost too large for the diminutive plot. On one side is the church, and opposite to it is "The Wave" inn, an old house with a beautiful hanging sign showing a three-masted ship in full sail. On the third side of the *place* a flight of stone steps leads up to an arcade under a house. The arches of the arcade form a kind of gallery which looks down into the square as a theatre box may look down upon a stage. In the arcade is a swing for the village

children, while out of it leads a tempting path which, skirting the very roof of the church, winds uphill among the vines. The whole setting suggests a scene in a rustic opera.

The village itself is picturesque, with its alleys, its dark passages and its curious houses. One house bears the date 1612, another has a fine loggia of stone, while many have balconies and outside stairs which give the place much attraction.

The church is famous. It dates from the 15th century, and occupies the site of an edifice of even greater age. It has a grand square tower and presents within a fine Gothic roof and a gracious choir. Its chief treasure is a stained-glass window given by Bishop Sébastien de Montfalcon in 1530, in which the bishop is shown on his knees before the Virgin and St. Saphorin. A writer in the *Dictionnaire Historique* considers this window to be one of the finest in the whole of Vaud. Placed in the church for safe keeping are an inscribed stone of the Roman period in the form of an altar, found in the village, together with a Roman milestone, of the time of the Emperor Claudius, from the high road by Glérolles.

In a wall in the square at the top of the hill is a curious tablet of stone dated 1812. Carved upon it in prominent letters is a notice to carters that they must not descend the hill without putting a drag or shoe on the wheel and, further, must not allow timber to trail behind the cart. One would imagine that no carter, even if exhilarated by a "joy ride," would need this very obvious advice. As, however, the wagoner in 1812 was probably unable to read, the warning is

graphically conveyed to him in the form of a cart-wheel carved in stone to which is attached a most conspicuous drag.

A little way beyond St. Saphorin is the old **Château of Glérolles.** It is placed on the very edge of the Lake and, indeed, stands on a rock which was once an island, like that of Chillon; but the making of the railway has now united it to the mainland. The origin of the château is obscure. It comes into the light of history in the second half of the 18th century as a possession of the bishops of Lausanne. It seems from the earliest times to have been dignified by a lofty square tower of the type of the tower at Ouchy. The châtelain of Glérolles was appointed, until 1536, by the bishops and was endowed with considerable power, which he shared with an *avoué* or legal representative of Lausanne. The *Dictionnaire Historique* gives a list of the châtelains of Glérolles from 1312 to 1798. The most important part of the château—as it now appears—was the work of the last bishops of Lausanne, and notably of Aymon de Montfalcon, or Montfaucon, who held the see between the years 1491 and 1517. Glérolles was then a small fortress, and made itself obnoxious by the exacting of tolls from those who passed along the highway. On the west side of the building are still to be seen five coats of arms at different levels belonging to Bishop Aymon and to families with which he was allied. On the south face of the château (between the west block and the donjon) are six other coats of arms, also of the Montfalcons. These relate, it is surmised, to Sébastien de Montfalcon, the last of the bishops of Lausanne. Sébastien, when he fled from the city under the

circumstances detailed in Chapter XXXVIII, took refuge in Glérolles.

In 1808 Glérolles was sold, its glory faded, the aspect of romance died from its walls and it became a dull and uninteresting place, not due to attempts at restoration, but to attempts to convert it into a modern dwelling house. The *Dictionnaire Historique* says that the donjon of the château once contained on the first floor a chest of wood strengthened with plates of iron and furnished with a little wicket closed by bars. This went by the name of "the witches' cage."

Glérolles at the present day is a large rambling, disorderly building, half modern and half ancient, and so vague that it is neither a château, on the one hand, nor a dwelling house, on the other. It looks as if portions of a mediæval castle had been fused, in a muddled mass, with a farmhouse and a block or two of suburban flats. At the entry—on the side of the road—is a round tower which, no doubt, once commanded the drawbridge. Behind it is the lower part of the great square donjon or keep. This was, until recent times, a most commanding tower, as is evident from old prints,[1] where it is shown in its full grandeur with a steep, pointed roof and a row of sentry windows under the eaves. It appears that the new owners of the donjon, finding that its vast body cast an objectionable shadow on the vines across the road, pulled the old keep down to what may be called a proper agricultural level. It is now a most sorry object, but has just one memory left of its ancient glory in the form of a very dainty little window that looks across the Lake.

[1] "Histoire du Canton de Vaud," par P. Maillefer. Lausanne, 1903, p. 183.

The mass of the building has been modernized, although here and there an ancient window is visible, together with traces of handsome stonework. In the courtyard, which has still some element of dignity, will be seen the coats of arms which have been already described. The interior of the building was practically gutted and "brought up to date" some twenty or thirty years ago.

High up on the hill-side above Glérolles and very conspicuous to those who pass by on the Lake is the **Tower of Marsens.** It dominates the famous vineyards of Dézaley. It takes the form of a huge square tower surmounted by fragments of its old battlements and pierced by certain transomed windows which would belong probably to the 17th century. It has older windows, some with the original round arch and some of the type known as ogee. It dates from about the year 1140, and is supposed to have been built, as a *maison forte*, by that Bishop Landri de Durnes who erected the first Castle of Ouchy. Its history is uneventful and is much concerned throughout with the fact that it possessed a winepress. It has had very many owners, from a Lord of Gruyère, on the one hand, to an apothecary of Fribourg, on the other.

XXXVI

A CHAPEL IN A GROCER'S SHOP

CULLY, midway between Vevey and Lausanne, is a little town of 1,100 inhabitants. It can look back very far into the past, for there was a time when the lounger on the beach of Cully would have seen in the bay a lake village, an amphibious camp made up of thatched roofs and huts on a submerged field of piles. Later on the idler would have seen Roman legionaries and Roman merchants halting by the road, since Cully seems to have been a posting station or wayside caravanserai of some significance.

Cully, from its earliest days, has been devoted to the making of wine. It has probably made wine ever since wine-making was known in Europe. It makes wine still and makes it well and, indeed, does nothing else. Grapes and the winepress are the symbols of its being, the subject of its thoughts and the mark of its ambition. A bunch of grapes on a branch constitutes the ancient arms of Cully. They are grapes, it may be noticed, of such size and quality that they would seem to proclaim to the world, "These are the grapes of Cully." Someone, inspired by a sense of the fitness of things, has surmised that there was once a temple to Bacchus at Cully, but unfortunately the suggestion is unfounded. There are, however, other memorials which

may prove as significant. One day in the year 1882 a man digging in a vineyard by Cully unearthed a little bronze statuette of a Bacchante. It would seem to tell the story of a Roman wine-grower whose admiration of Bacchus was such that he kept this figure in his house. When the barbarians were seen to be swarming over the hills above Cully one can imagine him taking the image from its niche and hiding it among his vines. One must further suppose that he was killed or made prisoner, since certain it is that he never came back to claim the figure he cherished. So for nearly two thousand years a votary of Bacchus lay hid in the vineyards of Cully.

The records of Cully go back to the 10th century. It once belonged to the bishops, who did little but quarrel about their claims since the town was in the ecclesiastical parish of Villette. It seems to have been only feebly fortified, but possessed in 1577 both a *carcan* and a *virolet*. The former was a collar for the neck of criminals exposed to public view, and the latter a cage in which they were confined for convenient exhibition, to the delight, no doubt, of the boys of the place.[1]

Cully is an interesting spot in many ways. It has, in the first place, the most picturesque promenade on the Lake, a wide, leisurely promenade dignified by a row of fine old Lombardy poplars. On this parade is a monument to Major Davel, who was a *bourgeois* of Cully. The gallant Davel raised the standard of rebellion in 1723 with the forlorn hope of ridding Vaud of the dominion of Berne. He failed, and was executed at Vidy, near Lausanne, on April 24th, 1723.

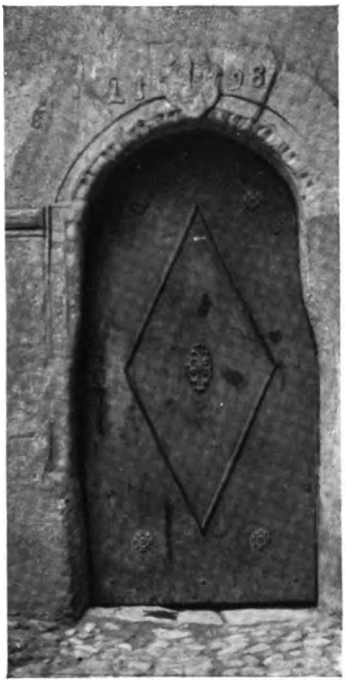
A still more charming feature of this unpretentious

[1] *Carcans* of various types are to be seen in the Vevey Museum.

town is displayed by the number of old houses that it contains, and especially by their beautiful doorways. Close to the church is an old building called the Sordet House. It, being very antique, is smothered with stucco, according to the Swiss custom. Its main feature is a square tower, on one angle of which—almost buried in plaster—is a fine Gothic niche. The doorway in the base of the tower is of handsomely carved stone, and bears the inscription, "1521. A.S." The letters are the initials of Aimé Sordet. The door opens upon a wide stone stair, the walls of which are ornamented at intervals with elaborate and curious pieces of carving, representing heads, coats of arms, reptiles and a man playing the bagpipes. The arms of the Sordet family, it may be noted, were a serpent with a gold crown. On the south wall of the house, which looks into a quaint courtyard, is an escutcheon, with on it a figure, helmet and lambrequin carved in stone. The house is now divided into poor tenements.

In the courtyard is a remarkable mediæval bench fashioned, or rather dug out, from the trunk of a tree, for it is in one solid piece. Wood can show its age in many ways. It may become black; it may become grey; it may be friable, riddled with worm-holes and covered with snuff-coloured dust. This bench is, however, as hard as a stone, as sunburnt as a summer fisherman and free from evidences of decay. Age shows itself in the extraordinary degree in which it is wrinkled. No shrivelled-up centenarian could show wrinkles so intricate nor furrows so deep.

The Sordets were great people in Cully in the 16th century, and by reason of holding the *seigneurie* of



CULLY: A DOOR OF 1598

CULLY: A MEDIÆVAL BENCH DUG OUT FROM A TREE TRUNK

Ropraz (near Mézières, north-east of Lausanne) had the status of noblemen. Aimé Sordet was one of the representatives, on the side of the Reformers, chosen to take part in the famous Religious Conference held at Lausanne in October, 1586.

There is another beautifully carved doorway in the town, bearing on the lintel the inscription, "1520. A. IESVS MARIA. S.," the first and last letters being the initials of the same Aimé Sordet. Among other notable stone entries in the town may be mentioned one with the date 1525 and the Sacred Heart in stone, another with the year 1598 over a round arch very curiously ornamented, and a third of much dignity marked by the date 1684. One humble doorway—a simple square entry of stone—must not be overlooked. It is crowned by a little head, the head of a nun with a pretty face and a most becoming coif. Her story would be interesting to know, for she must have been, at one time, the beauty of Cully.

The interiors of certain of the ancient houses in the town have changed but little during the last three or four hundred years. There are still to be seen the worn stone stair, the great carved beams in the ceiling, the 16th century windows and the doorway that would seem to pertain to a convent cell rather than to a modern kitchen.

There is a fountain in the centre of Cully, the stone basin of which bears the date 1648. It is surmounted by an ancient column on which is a figure still more ancient. This figure is evidently human and probably female. It is claimed to be a statue of Justice, but it is so corroded and battered that it has become as feature-

less as a nursery doll after years of service in a household where there are boys.

There was, by the way, a fountain or spring on the outskirts of the town that had the reputation of being able to drive away evil spirits. But this water supply was discouraged by the mediæval priests, as it appeared to encroach upon their special clerical functions and to be, indeed, competitive.

The church is new, having been rebuilt in 1866. The fine square tower, with its pointed windows, has remained untouched, while in its belfry are two bells which were cast in 1516 and 1568 respectively.

There is a small 16th century chapel in Cully which should not be passed by, as it is in many ways peculiar. It is not obtrusive and, indeed, is difficult to discover, for it is not to be found in any street or any square, nor, in fact, in any lane or passage. Access to it is not to be sought through the intervention of any curé, pastor or sacristan. It is approached in the following manner.

In the main thoroughfare of Cully is a large and prosperous grocer's shop, as modern as plate-glass windows and beribboned chocolate boxes can make it. The visitor enters the grocer's shop and, after appropriate inquiries, passes behind the counter to a small passage filled, almost to the point of bursting, with groceries in bulk. In a gap between the boxes and tins is a mediæval doorway in stone delicately carved. This is the entry to the chapel. It leads into a very dim room, the stagnant air of which is laden with the smell peculiar to a grocer's shop—a sickly, almost medicinal, smell compounded of coffee and soap, of vinegar and cloves, of oranges and sawdust. It is occupied from

floor to ceiling with bags of rice, biscuit tins, boxes of starch, boxes of candles, pickle-jars, jam-pots, stove polish and brooms. This is the interior of the chapel, although no ecclesiastical feature of any kind is as yet evident.

But there is a ladder in view which leads through a trap-door in the wooden ceiling. The visitor mounts the ladder and, crawling out into a kind of loft still encumbered with groceries, finds himself under a beautiful Gothic vault—the vault of the chapel itself. It is a groined roof of the 16th century, the ribs of which meet at a central key-stone whereon are carved the bunch of grapes—the arms of Cully. The spaces between the ribs are filled with a painted design of great beauty. The work is so like that in the nave of the church at Lutry that it can hardly be other than the work of the same artist. This little chapel is lit by a Gothic window, and although its light is not actually hidden under a bushel, it is dimmed by a baldachin of grocer's sundries.

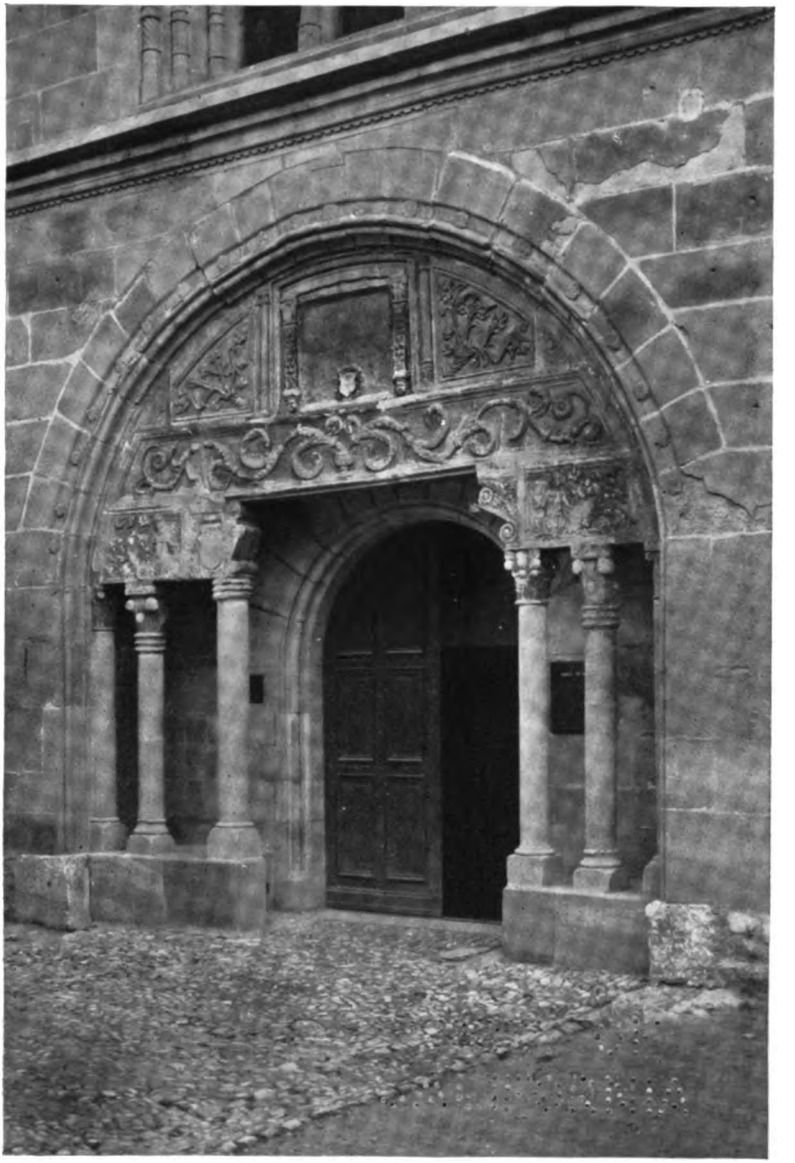
XXXVII

LUTRY

BETWEEN Cully and Lutry is the remarkable church of **Villette.** It is so close to the Lake as to be a prominent object from the passing steamer. It stands alone and apart from the village. Villette, now a little settlement of some 800 people, was once a place of great importance. The parish of Villette covered a very large area and included the town of Cully with no fewer than six communes. The church of Villette is first mentioned in the year 1184. It has been more than once rebuilt, but still retains many of its early characters. The choir is a curious, low, vault-like structure, with smooth walls as simple as the interior of a cave. The steeple, however, is the more remarkable feature of the church. It is a sharp-pointed steeple of stone mounted upon a square tower. Where the tower and the steeple meet are a number of little pointed niches of an unusual type, while in the tower itself are some large trefoil windows of great beauty. The church deserves a little better care than it appears to receive.

Just before Lutry is reached there will be seen on the hill-side a small but curious white tower known as the **Tower of Bertholo.** It is low, smooth-walled and semicircular, and is attached to the back of a quite bright villa. It looks rather like an old white shell on the back of a youthful snail. The tower has its ancient

LUTRY



LUTRY : THE CHURCH DOOR

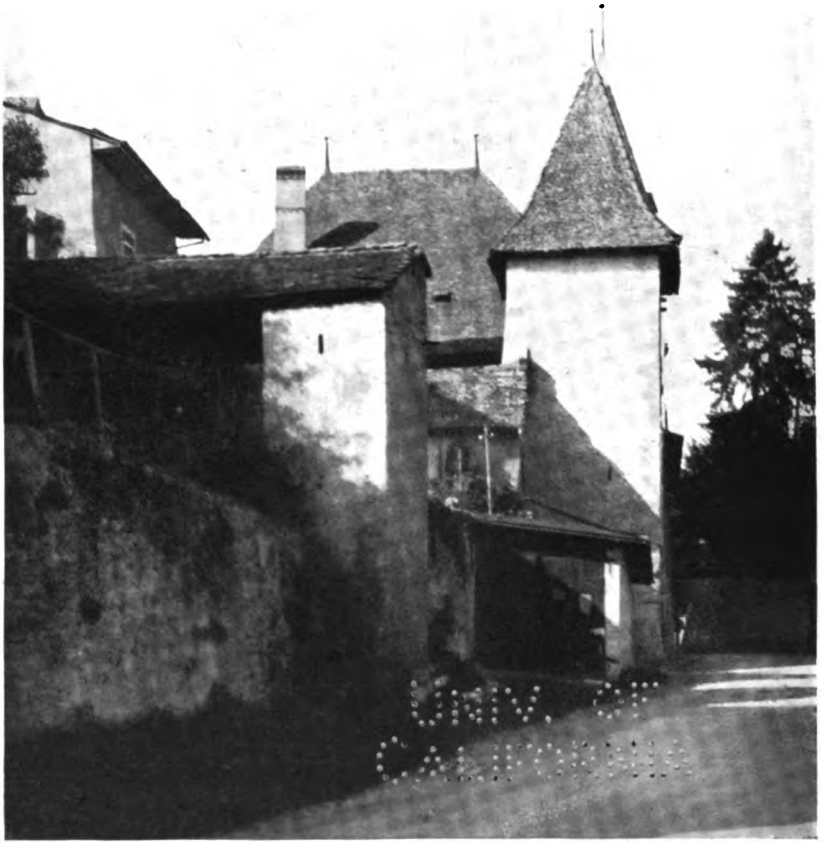
battlements and its mediæval loopholes. It has not suffered from restoration. It, at one time, had a fine conical roof, which was pulled down in the middle of the 19th century from motives of economy. The Tour de Bertholo is the remains of a castle built by Berthold de Neuchâtel, Bishop of Lausanne. He held office between the years 1212 and 1220. It was erected with the intent of affording an advanced post for the defence of Lutry. One family at least of the mayors of Lutry occupied this castle during the 14th century.

Lutry, a town of 2,560 inhabitants, is near to Lausanne, with which it is connected by a tramway. It is a grey and sober place, with narrow and moody-looking streets and a general aspect of unemotional old age. Like Cully, it has some memory of Roman days and can boast that it was at one time an important Burgundian town. Its chief attraction is its church, which was originally the church of the Priory of St. Martin, which priory was founded early in the 11th century. The church, on its present site, was built in 1228. The bishops of Lausanne regarded Lutry as one of their choicest possessions and looked after the town and the rich lands around it with a care that was a little too paternal. In the 11th century they appointed an *officier féodal* to protect their interests. He had the title of mayor, but possessed far wider judiciary and administrative powers than is associated with that title in England. The office became hereditary, and the family, having taken the name of Mayor de Lutry, developed into rather arrogant and domineering people. One thing, however, they did: they looked after the church.

The church was many times rebuilt, notably in 1844, after its destruction by fire, and again in 1569. During the restoration of the church in 1908 traces of a 12th and 13th century building were brought to light. The church is an exceptionally beautiful structure. The main door, with a round arch, was erected in 1570. It presents a tympanum of delicately carved stone supported by four pillars. The carving would seem to be the work of a man who loved carving for its own sake and could not resist the temptation of adding a little here and elaborating a little there, until he had produced the door of his heart's desire. Above the entry is a fine Gothic window.

The interior of the church is Gothic. Its most exquisite feature is the choir, with its three little rose windows. The whole of the groined roof of the church is painted, and presents as gracious a specimen of church mural decoration as will be found anywhere in the country. The design suggests an Italian origin. It is intricate and harmonious and produces a general effect of great charm. The work belongs to the 16th century. There is a lady chapel, marked off by a unique stone partition in which are three windows. The central one, over a square entry, is in a simple Gothic style, but the two side windows are of so quaint a type that none but an expert could pass judgment upon them. On the wall of this partition is an ancient and most attractive painting of the Madonna. Some of the old stalls in the church show the bear of Berne.

Lutry was fortified and surrounded by a wall in 1220. There were four gates in the enceinte, while the wall was protected at intervals by round towers. One of



LUTRY: THE CASTLE AND TOWN WALL.

these towers still survives on the west side of the town. It shows the old sentry windows and the narrow loop-holes, but it is in lamentable repair and has been much mutilated. On the top of it has been clapped a modern roof, which makes it almost ridiculous.

The castle is to the east of the town. It has a superb entry in the form of a wide round arch, over which is a gallery with heavy machicolations and on either side a turret. The upper part of this magnificent work has been destroyed. The gateway dates from the commencement of the 17th century. The arms above the archway are those of Crousaz de Corsy and Cerjat, and recall the marriage of François Crousaz with Judith de Cerjat in March, 1628. It was at this period that the castle was acquired by the Crousaz family, as the *Dictionnaire Historique* affirms. The castle, on something like its present lines, is said to have been built in the 16th century upon the site of a château of an earlier period. Over a door in the inner court are the arms of Berne and the date 1551. As it appears to-day it is a fine and picturesque building, modernized to some extent, but still presenting its magnificent roof and its two old square towers. One of these is a part of the château itself, while the other—the smaller of the two—is detached and represents a defensive outpost. The interior of the building is said to contain some fine deeply panelled ceilings (*plafonds à caissons*).

By the castle are traces of the city wall, upon the summit of which the castle stood. The road by the side of this wall (shown in the photograph) follows the course of the old moat.

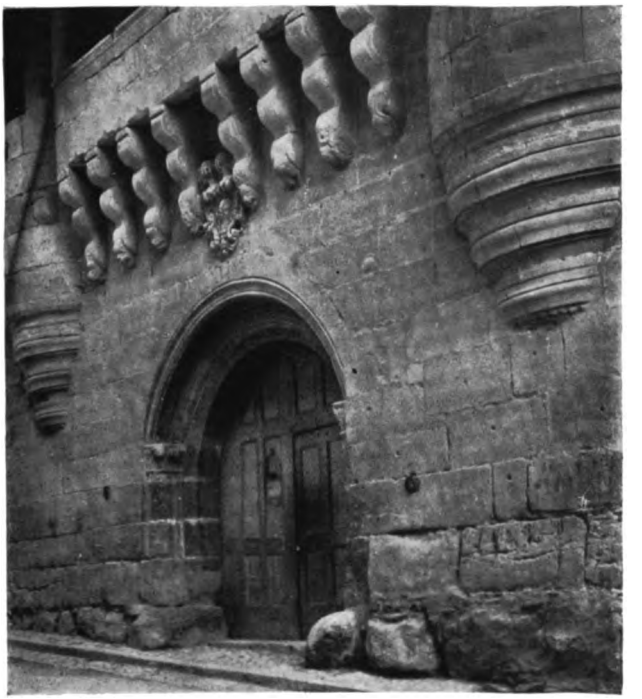
On the outskirts, on the way to Vevey, there is to

be seen in a wall an odd thing—a stone road-sign. It takes the form of a slab of stone on which is carved in relief a hand and arm, together with the date 1786 and a notification to the effect that the hand points out the road to Vevey. The hand has the anatomical simplicity of the hand on an Egyptian or Assyrian monument, but it serves its purpose; it clearly shows the road and has, besides, a friendly and human look about it which is lacking in the modern curt and peremptory arrow.

A little above Lutry is the village of **Corsy.** It is a place of no present interest, but was made famous by the memorable *Jugement de Dieu* in the year 908. Boson, the Bishop of Lausanne, laid claim to the forest of Jorat. His claim was disputed, and the matter was left to be decided by the Judgment of God. The king allowed the bishop to sustain his right by "proof of the hot iron." One of the bishop's servants, a man named Arnulphe, was chosen for the test. A red-hot iron was applied to his hand, and it was agreed that if the imprint of the iron was still visible on the third day following the operation the bishop would lose the forest. The hand was bound up in linen and the dressing sealed with the signet of the king. On the third day—amid tense excitement—the bandage was removed at this very village of Corsy, where the king was holding his assizes. No trace of the burn was visible, and so the forest became the freehold property of the bishop.[1]

This curious but venturesome procedure, which involved a combination of Divine agency, some sensational surgery and the dry legal process of conveyancing, has very reasonably fallen into disuse.

[1] "Dictionnaire Historique de Vaud."



LUTRY: THE CASTLE DOOR

LUTRY: THE STONE HAND

XXXVIII

LAUSANNE

LAUSANNE, the capital of the Canton of Vaud, is the smaller of the two cities of the Lake. It stands on a green slope which glides, in leisurely fashion, from the wood which crowns its summit to the beach at its foot. The town is far up on this slope, being about a mile and a quarter above the port of Ouchy.

Seen from the Lake, it is so discursive a city that no one could venture to define its outlines. Its houses are scattered in all directions, among trees and lawns, gardens and green fields. It is as if a drop of stone-coloured paint, falling from a height, had been spattered over a green cloth. It seems to be composed entirely of suburbs. If Chislehurst were given a cathedral and transferred to a lake-side it might pass muster for Lausanne, since there is nothing to suggest that this city of Vaud is so serious as it is or that it possesses 67,000 inhabitants.

Lausanne when seen from a distance and Lausanne when viewed from within are two towns which are totally unlike. A more deceptive place does not exist. From afar Lausanne seems to occupy a hill-side as smooth as a cushion. There is nothing to suggest that it contains streets, much less railway stations, tramlines and shops. When, on the other hand, the place is

entered it is found to be as irregular and tumbled a town as could be imagined, a place built in detachments without a plan, a labyrinth of streets, of green terraces and gardens, of slums and many-arched bridges all joined up with a "central square" which is neither square nor central. To this very disorder the town owes much of its attraction, for the agreeable medley is due to the fact that Lausanne is located, not on an even slope, but on three abrupt hills separated by deep valleys. Were it not that these valleys are crossed by a series of bridges, life in Lausanne would consist in climbing up hill and in walking down again. Moreover, Alfred de Bougy, writing in 1846, says that owing to the hills and the villainous paving, Lausanne was, in his day, practically inaccessible to carriages.[1]

The hills are round and are disposed in a triangle, like the balls of a pawnbroker's sign. They are the Cité, the Bourg and St. Laurent. On the Cité, or predominant hill, are the castle and the cathedral. This mound is, and always has been, the high place of the town and the stronghold of its government. The Bourg was possessed by the nobles, by the merchants and by the great inns. St. Laurent was a suburb occupied by a church and certain defence works. The poorer folk lived in the gutters between the hills. In one of these flowed the Flon and in the other the Louve. Their channels met at the Grand Pont; but, within the actual compass of the town, both streams have now disappeared from view.

From ancient prints[2] it can be seen that old Lausanne

[1] "Le Tour du Léman," par A. de Bougy. Paris, 1846.

[2] "Itinera Alpina," par J. J. Scheuchzeri. Ludg. Bat., 1723. *Tome* ii, p. 496.

LAUSANNE

was a very romantic looking town. Its three hills were crowned with castle and spire, with turrets and high-soaring roofs; while around it ran a zigzag wall pierced by gates and surmounted by many towers. The dwellings that made up the mass of the city were of dark wood with lofty gables. They huddled in the valleys like a drift of autumn leaves in a gully. Of the fortifications, no trace remains with the exception of one tower, the Tour de l'Ale, which stands near the Place du Chauderon on the St. Laurent hill. It is a high round tower of the days of the musketeers, which finds itself now very inappropriately placed in a modest street of private houses.

Modern Lausanne is, in spite of its uneasy site, an imposing city, spick and span and well-to-do. It has many fine public buildings, but they are nearly all new, for so strong has been the passion for "improvements" that old Lausanne has almost passed away, while in its place is a city which might have been built within the memory of living men.

On the summit of the Cité hill, and therefore on the highest point of the town, stands the château. It has been admirably restored and is a perfect monument of its kind. It stands alone—a square, grey mass of heavy masonry, pierced by a few small windows and surmounted by a steep, russet-coloured roof. Between the roof and a line of machicolations the castle wall is of pale red brick, while at each corner of the building is a turret also made of brick. The whole castle is a realization of solidity, of simplicity and of terrific strength. It was erected within the period 1397-1481. The Cité was then well fortified and was surrounded by a wall.

One of the most memorable years in the history of the château was the year 1536. For some three centuries before this date Lausanne, together with the whole Swiss shore of the Lake, belonged to Savoy. The rule of Savoy was indulgent and was committed to the hands of the bishops of Lausanne, who lived with the splendour and dignity of princes on the Cité hill. The whole country was, of course, Catholic. The Reformation, which had already begun, spread rapidly to Berne. In Berne it assumed a bellicose form, for the Bernese were earnest and determined men who regarded as enemies those who held opinions that differed from their own. They approached Lausanne with an army under General Nægueli on March 31st, 1536. They entered the town without difficulty. Indeed, the people, who were themselves mostly reformers, welcomed their coming.

The first object of the Bernese was to seize the person of the bishop. His name was Sébastien de Montfalcon. He was sitting in his room in the castle very ill at ease, for while he hurried to and fro stuffing things into his pockets he was compelled, at every moment, to take a look through the windows at the hot, excited men who were swarming up the hill. The castle was readily taken, and the leading Bernese, dashing up the stair, broke into the bishop's chamber with a shout. They found it empty. Now, concealed behind a great seat or desk was a secret passage which led by means of a stair in the thickness of the castle wall to the Chemin Neuf at the foot of the hill.[1] The bishop had taken advantage of this passage and had escaped. He fled, as has been already noted, to Glérolles.

[1] "Délices de la Suisse," par Blanchet. Basle, 1764.

LAUSANNE: FOUNTAIN AND TOWN HALL

The identical chamber he left is still to be seen. It is on the first floor of the castle, and is a small, low-pitched, comfortable room with two windows and a hospitable fireplace. The ceiling is elaborately decorated, while carved on the chimney-piece are the arms of Montfalcon and the motto, "*Si qua fata sinant.*" The embrasures of the windows serve to show the enormous thickness of the walls. The secret door is no longer to be seen, although Read,[1] writing in 1897, speaks as if the passage was in evidence at that date. The attendant who shows the room indicates the position of the hiding-place, and by thumping on the wall elicits, in response, a hollow and emotional sound which is quite convincing. The long corridors of the château are impressive, as is also the main entry, but the site of the drawbridge is occupied—for the time being—by a small modern building.

On the Cité hill stands also the famous Cathedral of Notre-Dame, built between the years 1235 and 1275, and so fully restored at the end of the last century (from the plans of Viollet-le-Duc) that it appears almost a new building. The fine Gothic tower and the exquisite steeple form the actual pinnacles of Lausanne. The Apostles' Porch, the great rose-window, the carved stalls of the 15th century and the wall paintings of the same period are too well known to need description. No one can fail to be impressed by the main entry, with its huge flamboyant window, its statues of saintly men, its elaborate ornamentation and its old brown doors with their very ancient lions' heads in bronze.

The church, being Protestant, is very bare, bare save

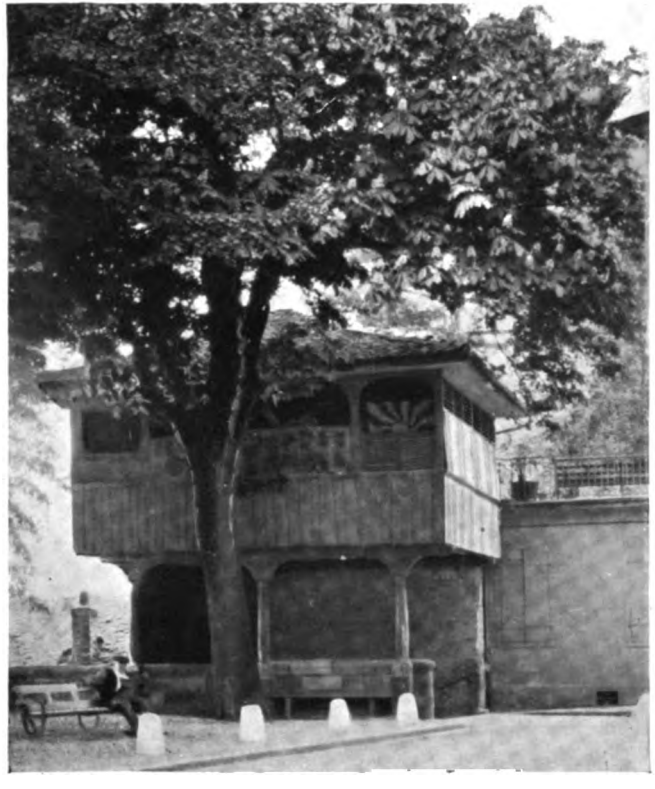
[1] *Op. cit.*

for the scattered seats and the pulpit, and devoid of all colour except such as streams through the crimsons and blues that fill the tracery of the rose-window. There is no altar; but the place it occupied in the choir is marked by two curious impressions in the stone floor. They are just such depressions as the knee of a kneeling man would make on soft sand. They correspond to either side of the altar and are assumed to have been worn by the knees of worshippers clad in armour. If that be so, they must represent the obeisance of many thousands of men in mail through a vast procession of years.

This cathedral was the scene of the famous Disputation held on July 5th, 1536, in which Farel, Calvin and Viret took part, with the result that Vaud separated from the Romish Church and the episcopal see was removed to Fribourg.

The Bernese, having scared the bishop from his castle, dealt in effective fashion with the treasures in the church. Aided by the people, they broke up the altar with hammers, tore down the sacred images and left them, headless and armless, amid the dust of the floor, put their feet through precious paintings and stripped from the walls the hangings of fine silk. In the nave they heaped up a pile of loot of such brilliancy that it needed no beam from the stained-glass window to give it radiance; for here were crucifixes and candlesticks of sparkling metal, ewers and patens of gold, reliquaries flashing with gems, a chalice that shone like the moon, statuettes of silver and vases of polished brass. The men of Berne kept a firm hold upon Lausanne and established in the castle a *bailli* or governor, who ruled the converted city with a rod of iron.

LAUSANNE: THE MARKET STAIRS



LAUSANNE: THE WOODEN HOUSE

In addition to the château on the Cité was an episcopal palace. This seems to have been in existence as late as 1705. It was subsequently pulled down to make room for the chestnut terrace which is one of the delights of Lausanne. One tower of this palace remains. It still looks down, with an assumption of superiority, upon the town it once kept in awe, although it has now become, very meekly, a part of a most interesting museum.

The fine mansions on the Cité have all vanished, but behind the cathedral, in the Rue Cité Derrière, there are yet some old houses of modest pretence—such as No. 23—which are of interest. It was in this street that Gibbon lodged when he first came to Lausanne.

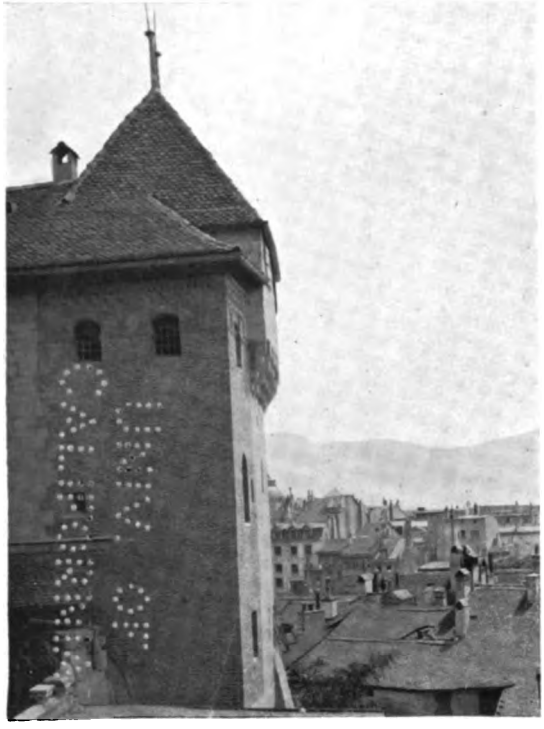
The hill of the Bourg was also fortified and surrounded by a wall. Between it and the hill of the Cité flowed the Flon, the course of which is marked by the present Rue Centrale. The Bourg and the Cité were by no means always at peace in the early days. They were, indeed, for years the most quarrelsome of neighbours and flew at one another across the Flon on occasion with much beating of drums, much shrieking of women from the walls and much shaking of fists. For example, in 1240 there were two competitors for the episcopal chair of Lausanne. The Bourg sided with Jean de Cossonay, the Cité with Phillippe de Savoie. Although the question was one merely of Church government, the men of the two hills fought with such intemperance that there were no fewer than 300 casualties. Fighting was a chronic condition around most fortified towns, and Lausanne was no exception. The cause of the fighting was often obscure and as often trivial. One reads that

in a certain bloody encounter without the walls in 1476 an English knight was killed. His skull was found long after in a cemetery of Lausanne with a rose noble fixed between the teeth.[1]

The Bourg, as already stated, was occupied by the nobles. Its main street, the Rue de Bourg—a steep and narrow way—is the main street still. Read gives a list of the distinguished families who once lived there and also of the great inns, such as the "Golden Lion," the "Angel" and the "Bear," that found a place on this hill. At the foot of the street is a modernized business house with a corner turret. The corbel which supports the turret has carved on it, in archaic fashion, the head of a man with a heavy moustache and the words, "A TOY MON DIEU MON COEUR MONTE." This house, before the Reformation, belonged to the Bishop of Lausanne. It came, about 1550, into the possession of the Deyverdun family. One of the Deyverduns was the intimate friend of Gibbon when he lived in Lausanne. In front of the house and at the foot of the hill country women come with baskets of flowers, as has been the custom for centuries past; so the man with the moustache is still cheered by the sight of a bank of daffodils and violets, of iris and anemones, of roses and mimosa, and at the grateful sight his stone lips may still mutter the words which are written at the base of the turret.

The citizens of the Rue de Bourg had curious responsibilities in the matter of the administration of justice, for they formed a kind of jury of experts who were liable to be called upon in legal emergencies. "They were

[1] A gold coin of the time of Edward IV. of the nominal value of ten shillings.



LAUSANNE: TOWER OF BISHOP'S PALACE

LAUSANNE: THE CHÂTEAU

required," says Vulliemin, "at the first summons, even if at table, glass in hand, or occupied in measuring cloth, to leave everything and, running to range themselves around the bailiff or the bishop, to give their advice as people versed in the customs of the city. As a recompense they were free from 'lauds' and alone had the right to place benches before their houses for the disposal of their wares."[1]

On the Bourg, in the Place St. François, is the church of St. Francis. It dates from the 15th century, but it has—like every other old edifice in Lausanne—been so restored that it appears to be quite a new building. It is composed only of a nave and choir, is a church of great dignity, grand in its proportions and most simple in its decoration. Leading from the Place St. François is Rue du Grand Chene. At No. 6 in this street Voltaire lived in 1757, but, it is needless to say, the cyclone of "improvements" has swept the house out of existence.

In the valley between the Cité and the Bourg is the curious Place de la Palud. It was in ancient days the business centre of the town as well as its market-place. It retains its activity still, and on prescribed days is as packed with country-folk and their baskets, panniers, carts and stalls as its narrow confines will allow. There is a fountain in the *Place*, surmounted by the figure of an oddly-shaped woman, clumsily clad, who realized in 1585 the popular conception of Justice. Here also is the Hôtel de Ville, with its great motherly roof, its gaily painted clock-tower and its superb façade. It was founded in 1454, but the present structure dates from

[1] Quoted by Read, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 43.

1674. Having in view the grand new public edifices of Lausanne, it would, no doubt, be rank heresy to suggest that this town hall is by far the handsomest building of its kind in the city.

Where the Rue St. Laurent joints the Palud stood the de Loys house, notable as the birthplace of M. de Loys de Warens, whose fame depends solely upon the fact that he was the indistinct husband of the flamboyant Madame de Warens. Read gives a picture of the house as it was in his time. It was a dwelling of infinite charm, with its courtyard, its fine front, its stair, with the date 1650, and its great roof where, amid the black tiles, were two lovers' knots and a red ace of diamonds. The house and the garden have, of course, been cleared away, to be replaced by premises which, in their unblushing plainness, are almost pathetic.

Leading from the Palud to the terrace by the cathedral are the Market Stairs. In a simple way they form one of the most picturesque features in the city and are designated as one of its historical monuments. The stairway is of old grey wood and is very steep. It is covered, in all its length, by a roof of red tiles held up by wooden pillars. It is very shady, very full of echoes, very old and a stair of some mystery, for one wonders where it will end. It ends delightfully and appropriately by opening on the terrace, beneath one of the most curious little houses ever conceived in a story-book. The house is of wood, is supported upon wooden columns (like a balcony) and is shaded by a chestnut tree. In the place of windows it has shutters or jalousies, which are prettily arranged. It is rather a gallery than a dwelling, rather a summer-house than a sitting-room,

and yet it has, in a childish way, an official appearance, a faint suggestion of a mayor and corporation. It is apparently entered by an ancient door on the stairway which does not seem to have been opened for a century. In the museum near by is a print, dated 1678, in which this little house, or an ancestor of it, is depicted very much as it is to-day. A man, whom I imagined to be unreliable, told me that it was the place from which proclamations were read to the people. If this be true the people would hardly take the message gravely, for the little house is so fantastic, so like a dwelling out of Hans Andersen's fairy tales, that it could never be the scene of anything really serious.

To the day-dreamer I would commend this spot above all in Lausanne. The place is always quiet, always drowsy, always in the twilight of the trees. It is cool, for a breeze from the Lake will steal up here when it will wander nowhere else. There are many benches to choose from, so the dreamer can sit and gaze at the little house and people it with whom he will.

XXXIX

GIBBON AT LAUSANNE

THE best remembered scenes in the life of Edward Gibbon have for a background the city of Lausanne. No reader of his immortal "Memoirs" can fail to be interested in visiting the places that figure in the story he has to tell. The Lausanne of Gibbon's time has almost passed away, but there are still the Rue de Bourg, the château, the Place de la Palud and the Market Stairs, while the house in which Gibbon lodged when he first came to the city is still standing.

In the year 1752 Gibbon, then only 15 years of age, was loafing aimlessly about the streets of Oxford as a gentleman commoner of Magdalen College. He was a pitiable object. He was the only surviving child of his parents. His mother had died when he was ten. His father neglected him, so his bringing up fell casually into the hands of his aunt, Catherine Porten, who was a very lovable lady. He had a wretched childhood, while of the happiness of boyish years he knew nothing. His education had been of the scantiest. Above all, he had been delicate and had suffered much at the doctor's hands. He very early came to the conclusion that he was doomed to be "an illiterate cripple."

At Oxford he did nothing, was taught nothing and was left entirely to his own devices. He regarded the

time he spent at Magdalen as "the most idle and unprofitable of his whole life." While at Oxford, and when 16 years of age, he became a Catholic. This conversion was the result, not of personal influence, but of the reading of Catholic books. He states that he had not even conversed with a priest. His father, when dutifully informed of this change of faith, became violent, as was his habit in the face of any untoward event, threatened to disinherit the boy and bundled him off, at a few days' notice, to Lausanne, then the most strictly Protestant town in Europe. At Lausanne he was to be under the charge of a Calvinist minister named Pavilliard. Having regard to the father's ignorance of Lausanne and the fact that he—in the main—wished to punish the lad, he did better than he knew.

Young Gibbon left for Lausanne in the care of a Swiss gentleman. The two started from London on June 19th, 1753, crossed from Dover to Calais and, although they travelled "post haste all the way" and with the utmost expedition, did not reach Lausanne until June 30th.

M. Pavilliard lived in the Rue Cité Derrière No. 17, and here young Gibbon lodged. The street is one of the few streets in the old quarter of Lausanne which have undergone but little change. It is a quiet street of private houses of the humbler type, is situated just behind the cathedral and is, indeed, between the cathedral and the château. The building is practically unaltered. It is an unpretentious house with two stories and an entry under a round stone arch. The windows are framed in stone after the manner of the 18th century. The right side of the house has been

modified, so far as the ground floor is concerned, and is now occupied by a small *Poste de Police;* but the greater part of the building is probably as it was in Gibbon's time, so that it only remains to speculate as to which of the heavily-shuttered windows was that of the room he occupied.

Gibbon was fortunate in his host. M. Pavilliard was a man of education and of great capacity as a teacher. He was kind-hearted, sympathetic, moderate in his religious views and, above all, tactful. There grew up between the Calvinist minister and the young Catholic a very hearty friendship. The pastor's influence soon began to take effect, so soon, indeed, that within eighteen months of his arrival at Lausanne Gibbon returned to the faith of his fathers, and on Christmas Day, 1754, received the Communion in a Protestant church.

The lad at first found life in the Rue Cité Derrière very disagreeable. He had no friends; he had very little pocket money; he was not allowed a personal servant; he could play no games. He deplored his unfitness for bodily exercise and had to become reconciled to a sedentary life. He read enormously, and very soon acquired a thorough knowledge of French. He could not endure Madame Pavilliard. He speaks of her "uncleanly avarice" and says that under her roof he was almost starved with cold and hunger, and recalls, with disgust, her "coarse and homely table." It was certainly a great change from the easy, idle life at Oxford, where he did as he pleased, had unbounded liberty and lived as gentlemen commoners were expected to live. Here at Lausanne were the discipline of a

Calvinist minister's house, regular hours, possibly rather tedious family prayers and the sour face of Madame Pavilliard gazing at him across the bare table.

Things, however, improved in time. The Pavilliards moved to another house (long since demolished), a pleasant tour through Switzerland was undertaken and young Gibbon began to make friends. His one particular friend was George Deyverdun, with whom, at a later period, he shared a house in Lausanne and with whom he remained on terms of affection until Deyverdun's death in 1789.

He met also another friend—a lady—who was destined to play an emotional part in his otherwise rather drab existence. She was a Mademoiselle Susanna Curchod, who became a famous personage in the literary and social annals of the Lake of Geneva. Susanna was the daughter of the Protestant minister of Crassier, a little village on the French border which is described in Chapter XLVII. "Her fortune was humble," writes Gibbon, "but her family was respectable," and she had been exceptionally well educated by her father. She came to Lausanne on a visit to some relatives, and here Gibbon met her. The momentous meeting was in June, 1757, when Gibbon was twenty and the pastor's daughter eighteen.

The future historian was not heroic in appearance. He is described as a thin, pale little figure with a large head covered with red hair and a nose that a heartless French writer, in later years, compared to a potato. Susanna was pleasant to look upon, had a refined, intelligent face and delicate features. She would be described as elegant, or, in the language of the day,

"genteel." Her primness was a pronounced characteristic. One writer, quoted by Gribble,[1] says, "God, before creating her, must have soaked her, inside and out, with starch." In spite of her primness she was a most amiable woman of whom everyone thought well and spoke kindly. Her portraits do not justify the claim that she was beautiful and fail to confirm the opinion of Gibbon that "Nature had endowed her with a beauty which would soften a tyrant and inflame an anchorite."

The two young people became engaged. He visited her at her home in Crassier, as is recorded in Chapter XLVII, and there is no reason to doubt that the engagement was approved by the lady's parents. This was in the autumn of 1757. There were love letters, of course, written in the manner of the time. To-day they read rather like exercises in prose, perfect in style, but lacking the warmth of life, artificial and extravagant and as little like the love-song of a bird as a concert performance on a flute.

Gibbon was recalled to England in April of the following year (1758). He announced his engagement to his father, who again became violent, refused his consent and let his son understand that if he persisted in his folly he would find himself "destitute and helpless." Mr. Gibbon, senior, wishing to be unpleasant, alluded to Mademoiselle Curchod as a "foreigner," which was then a term of reproach that implied inferiority and suggested a proneness to indefinite delinquencies.

Young Gibbon reached England in May, but it was not until August that he wrote to Mademoiselle Curchod to break off the engagement. The letter which

[1] "Madame de Staël and her Lovers." London, 1907.

LAUSANNE: THE HOUSE IN WHICH GIBBON LODGED

announced this breach of promise has been quoted so often that to many it is the only specimen of Gibbon's writings with which they are familiar. As a literary production it is perfect. As a model of a letter, which of all letters in the world must be the most difficult to write, it is a finished work. Epistles of this type are often rudely exposed to the public gaze, but their literary feebleness can only be appreciated by comparing them with Gibbon's little masterpiece.

Mademoiselle Curchod was, of course, hurt; but she remained dignified, for her primness saved her from being dramatic. In 1760 the minister of Crassier died, and his stipend died with him. "His daughter," writes Gibbon, "retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother." Susanna appears, a little later, to have become companion to a Madame Vermenoux, a wealthy widow who lived in Geneva but frequently visited Paris. Necker, the rising banker, had long wooed Madame Vermenoux and had, indeed, proposed to her; but she had declined his offer, hoping to meet with a more aristocratic suitor. On her return to Paris with her young companion she found that Necker had not only continued to rise, but had attained a position of prominence and was likely to become the counsellor of kings. The widow at once determined that her persistent lover had now risen so far as to approach her conception of an aristocratic suitor, and resolved to accept his proposal when next it was tendered. It was, however, never offered, for when Necker saw the widow's charming companion he at once fell in love with her, promptly proposed and was primly accepted. The marriage took

place in 1764, and the event is said to have caused the widow "acute suffering." So the minister's daughter from the humble village of Crassier became Madame Necker, destined to be famous as the châtelaine of Coppet and the mother of the illustrious Madame de Staël.

Gibbon returned to Lausanne in May, 1763, and remained there eleven months. He felt that he could not again face Madame Pavilliard and her parsimonious fare, so he became a boarder in the "elegant house" of a M. De Mesery. Here he lived in great comfort, and records with satisfaction that the food was plentiful and the boarders "select." The position in Lausanne of the "elegant house" has, unfortunately, never been traced.

It was during this period of his stay in Lausanne that Gibbon tells of his favourite society, *La Société du Printemps*. He says it was "a singular institution." Considering that it flourished in a puritan city imbued with the rigorous teachings of Calvin it certainly was peculiar.

"It consisted of fifteen or twenty young unmarried ladies, of genteel, though not of the very first families; the eldest perhaps about twenty, all agreeable, several handsome, and two or three of exquisite beauty. At each other's houses they assembled almost every day, without the control, or even the presence, of a mother or an aunt; they were trusted to their own prudence, among a crowd of young men of every nation in Europe. They laughed, they sung, they danced, they played at cards, they acted comedies; but in the midst of this careless gaiety, they respected themselves and were respected by the men." [1]

[1] "Memoirs of My Life," by Edward Gibbon, p. 156.

Gibbon at Lausanne

About 1758 Gibbon met Voltaire who had at that time a house in Lausanne. Gibbon was then twenty-one and the French philosopher sixty-four. The two did not take at all kindly to one another. To Voltaire the future historian was merely "a fat-faced youth called Gibbon," while to Gibbon the Frenchman was a not too pleasant and much over-rated playwright. Although Gibbon paid more than one visit to Ferney (the last in 1768), the two writers never became more than formal acquaintances.

In 1765 Gibbon was in Paris, on which occasion he called upon Madame Necker, who received him very graciously. The meeting was, no doubt, a little trying, but they were both astute enough to make it as free from embarrassment as was possible. The two, who had once been lovers, became devoted friends and corresponded with one another, in the warmest but most discreet terms, for the remainder of their lives. Madame Necker was attracted to Gibbon by his great intellectual abilities, while he never ceased his admiration of her fine qualities as a woman. It was a platonic attachment, if ever there was one, and if some element of romance occasionally crept in it gave to the friendship a certain picturesqueness. Gibbon visited the Neckers not only in Paris but also at Coppet. Mention is made of one such visit to Coppet in 1790. At that time Madame de Staël, who was at the château, was twenty-four, but as Gibbon fails to allude to the whirlwind lady she probably merely frightened him. Madame Necker's last letter to Gibbon is dated June 15th, 1792. He died in January, 1794, and she in the May that followed.

Between 1758 and 1788 Gibbon was in England,

except during a tour in Italy in 1764-5 and a visit to Paris in 1777. In England he did strange and improbable things. He joined the army in the diluted form of the militia, became a major and indeed a lieutenant-colonel, and rode about on a horse. Further than that he became a member of Parliament, in which office he filled "the humble station of a mute." He went even more widely astray, for he was appointed a Lord Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, he having no knowledge of either trade or trees. In this dignified position he "enjoyed," as he says, "many days and weeks of repose."

His father having died in 1770, he was now possessed of ample means, and in September, 1783, he returned to his beloved Lausanne. He took up his abode with his friend George Deyverdun, who owned a house in Lausanne called "La Grotte." Gibbon undertook the expense of the house, and here he hoped to end his days. La Grotte was very beautifully situated. It stood on the brink of the hill in front of the church of St. François, was open to the south and commanded a superb view of the Lake and of the mountains of Savoy. It was surrounded by a garden of four acres in which was a summer-house. Here Gibbon wrote, and here, in 1787, he completed his great work, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Read has given an interesting history of La Grotte, from which it appears that it was originally a part of the Convent of St. François and was, as such, occupied by vaults where muniments and treasures were stored. A photograph shows a house of no great interest and evidently of no great age. It had a very lofty and steep roof. On the road front there was but one story, while

on the southern side—owing to the slope of the ground —there were three. In general terms it would be described as an unpretentious suburban villa.

La Grotte has long since been pulled down, and on its site and on a part of its garden has been erected the Post Office, the most prominent building in Lausanne. An hotel, called the Hôtel Gibbon, came to occupy the western end of the grounds, so that the garden of the hotel represented all that was left of the garden that Gibbon loved.

So long as La Grotte stood it was visited every year by a horde of sightseers and admirers or pseudo-admirers of Gibbon. Between the years 1802 and 1881 the house was occupied by an old lady named Madame Grenier. She has left it on record that for nearly a generation the pilgrimage of visitors was continuous. They came to see the historic summer-house and to take away a piece of it as a memento. "As every English visitor cut away a portion, the summer-house gradually disappeared from Lausanne and was distributed in fragments through Great Britain. Bit by bit the owners renewed it, but eventually not a morsel of the original was left."[1] A totally new summer-house was built, but that also was hacked away by the penknives of enthusiastic tourists. It is apparent that a proportion of these relic-hunters had but a vague knowledge of the hero they worshipped. Two items of information confirm this impression. "A time came," as Mr. Hill states in his appendix, "when the guides began to point out the venerable Madame Grenier, if she chanced to be in the garden, as Gibbon's widow"; and further, in *Notes and Queries* the follow-

[1] Appendix No. 51 of G. Birkbeck Hill's edition of the Memoirs.

ing conversation (overheard at the Hôtel Gibbon) is recorded:

SHE: "Whose portrait is that?"
HE: "Gibbon, after whom the hotel is named."
SHE: "But who was Gibbon?"
HE: "One of the English Royal Family."

The Hôtel Gibbon was pulled down in the summer of 1921. During the process—which I witnessed—the garden was turned into a white desert of plaster, bricks and stones, a desert of mounds like a white sand dune, dimmed by a cloud of dust. Out of this waste rose three little trees, young, eager and rustling with life. They will by this time have vanished; but while they lived they had a pathetic interest, for they were the very last green things that grew in Gibbon's garden.

XL

OUCHY

OUCHY is the port of Lausanne, a pleasant and pretty suburb and a favourite resort of tourists, since for all who travel by steamer Ouchy is the Charing Cross of the Lake. It is well wooded, has a garden promenade, a little harbour occupied by sailing boats and swans and some of the best hotels in the canton.

But a little while ago Ouchy was a mere fishing village. It is described in the middle of the 19th century as a neglected place whose narrow lanes were often deep in mud and whose houses were doddering with decay. To the east of the village were the old *Halles de la Ville* in a state of impecunious ruin. Passengers who arrived by steamer had to be taken ashore in small, flat-bottomed boats, for there was no pier to accommodate a vessel of any size.

It was not until 1858 that Ouchy woke from its mediæval slumber, opened its rheumy eyes, stretched its cramped limbs, and cast off its time-worn rags. The transformation was remarkable. In 1859 the Hôtel Beau Rivage was founded, while, about the same time, a landing pier worthy of the port of Lausanne rose from the Lake. Ouchy had always been a port. It had even a service of ships; for as long ago as 1760 a barque

sailed on every Monday for Vevey and on every Tuesday for Geneva. So Mondays and Tuesdays were busy days on the beach of Ouchy.

In very early days a castle was built at Ouchy to protect the port by Bishop Landri de Durnes, but it seems to have been soon destroyed by marauders from Savoy. It was replaced by a far more massive building by Bishop Roger between the years 1178 and 1212.[1] It had a great square donjon with a fine building at its foot and was surrounded by a moat and by a wall upon which two round towers were planted. Here the bishops lived. Here they had their own chapel and here they held important conferences. They looked after the port and especially after the harbour dues and did a good business as transport agents. They were never short of fish, for it was ordained that every boatman, when he went a-fishing, must make—on each occasion—a cast of the net for the bishop. If it rested with the fisherman to determine, *after the event*, which was the bishop's particular catch the impost was probably not exacting. After the bishops were driven out in 1536 the castle fell into decay. Old prints show it in progressive stages of decrepitude, but also show that the donjon tower still held its great head aloft, through century after century, although the castle was put to all kinds of mean ends. It became a custom-house and even a depot for salt, finally degenerating into a shapeless block of derelict buildings.

The fortifications were destroyed towards the end of the 17th century. The castle stood close to the edge of the Lake so that the water reached to the wall with

[1] "Dictionnaire Historique de Vaud."

which the old stronghold was surrounded. The land that now lies in front of the château and which embraces the piers and the public garden has been reclaimed from the Lake in recent years. The site of the château is now occupied by a modern hotel with which the tower—restored out of all recognition—is incorporated. In its lower part the ancient walls are still to be seen, but as it ascends it changes from the donjon keep of feudal times to an up-to-date hotel of the 20th century with results which may be imagined.

Byron and Shelley were detained at Ouchy by heavy rain for two days when returning from their visit to Meillerie (page 145). This was in June, 1816. They stayed at an inn which is referred to as "a small inn in the village of Ouchy." It was here that Byron wrote "The Prisoner of Chillon." The inn was called at the time "L'Ancre," but it is now the Hôtel d'Angleterre. From prints of about the year 1816 it would appear that the inn has not greatly altered. It has been enlarged and has lost the double flight of steps by which the entry was approached. By the side of the hotel is a cluster of old houses which have changed but little since Byron's time and which the poet would no doubt recognize if he visited the Ouchy of to-day.

Between Ouchy and Lausanne is a green hill called Montriond. The north slope is wooded and transformed into a public garden, but the south side, that turns towards the Lake, is still a smooth slope covered with grass which probably looks as it looked a thousand years ago. On this green mound there assembled in the year 1086 a great company of barons, bishops and knights from France, from Savoy and from the country round.

On the top of the hill stood a venerable prelate, Bishop Hugues of Lausanne, to whose earnest utterances the company listened with attention. To his appeal they yielded so that before the assembly dispersed there was proclaimed from the summit of this green hill the *Trève de Dieu* or Truce of God.

Those who bound themselves to observe the Truce were committed to the following conditions. The church, the villager, the serf and the inoffensive merchant were not to be molested. Fighting and feuds were to cease each week from Wednesday night until Monday morning, and a like peace was to be observed during Church festivals as well as during the days of Advent and Lent. M. Maillefer[1] points out that these restrictions involved 240 days of inactivity, leaving only 125 days in the rest of the year for the business of fighting, of castle-storming and the raiding of towns. It is no matter of surprise—as the author remarks—that a time soon came when these limitations were "not strictly observed."

[1] "Histoire du Canton de Vaud." Lausanne, 1903, p. 122.

— D —

FROM LAUSANNE TO GENEVA

XLI

ST. SULPICE AND MORGES

THE shore of the Lake between Lausanne and Geneva is low, being little more than the sloping bank by a river's side. It is wooded all the way, and here and there, as if to emphasize its charm, a Lombardy poplar stands erect, like a note of exclamation. The rising ground behind the Lake margin, as far as Nyon, is devoted to the cultivation of the vine, for this is the great wine-growing district of La Cote. Apart from the vineyards, it is a simple pastoral country which is to be seen at its best behind Nyon, where amid "green haunts and deep inquiring lanes" are villages of serene delight.

There are low hills in the immediate background, the most conspicuous being La Cote, which starts at St. Prex. On the summit of this hill, near Rolle, is the Signal de Bougy, from which it is possible to see the Lake from end to end, as well as the range of Mont Blanc, some 47 miles distant. About half-way up the Lake the Jura Mountains come into view, sloping obliquely from the north, as if making for Geneva. As that city is approached the country becomes more

leisurely, more pleasure-loving, with more villas than farms, more gardens than tilled fields, until at last it lapses idly into a luxuriant suburb with not a few of the river-side features of Marlow or Henley-on-Thames.

Six kilometres from Ouchy by the Geneva road is the hamlet of St. Sulpice. The only objects of interest on the way are a stone which records the distances, not in kilometres, but in leagues, and, at Vidy, a chapel which is now little more than a barn with a bell gable and a Gothic door. It once was part of the hospital, La Maladière, to which, in the Middle Ages, lepers and victims of the plague were sent.

St. Sulpice is a trivial hamlet on a high bank, with just a café, a shop or so and a school. At the foot of the bank, by the edge of the Lake, is the famous church. It stands on a little green flat in company with a few chestnut trees, some poplars, two or three benches and a pier. As a specimen of an early church it is the most interesting ecclesiastical building on the Lake. It has been restored with skill and affords a vivid realization of the abbey church of its time.

The date of the foundation of the Priory of St. Sulpice is unknown, but the church itself dates from the commencement of the 12th century. It has remained practically unchanged in all these years. Unimportant alterations were made in the 15th century and in the year 1678. A tablet inside the church shows precisely what and where these alterations are, the most notable being the Gothic window of the central apse. The restorations occupied the years 1895-1903. A reference to old prints shows how piously these repairs have been carried out.

STONE SHOWING LEAGUES

ST. SULPICE

The church has a central square tower in a style that would in England be called the Norman. On the east or Lake side is a rounded apse with a very small additional apse on either side of it, each with a single slit-like window. The church within has a cove roof, uniform from end to end. The walls are painted in the style of the period, while in the dome of the central apse are old frescoes (restored) of Christ and the Four Evangelists.

The next place of any note beyond St. Sulpice is **Morges.** It lies on a shallow bay with almost level shores. Although the present town cannot claim to be of extreme age, yet some 7,000 years ago Morges was one of the most favoured abodes of man in this region, for here was the largest of the prehistoric lake villages. Lake dwellings are known to have existed at Thonon, Yvoire, Excenevex, Nernier, Hermance, Coppet, Rolle, St. Prex and Nyon, but the settlement at Morges seems to have been the most important of them all and, in its way, the metropolis. There appear to have been three villages, the largest of which was opposite to the present town. It was 1,812 feet long, from 180 to 800 feet wide and was surrounded by water which is now from 9 to 16 feet in depth.[1] Towards the end of the severe drought in the winter of 1920-21 the piles upon which the village of Morges were built appeared above the surface owing to the low level of the Lake. These ancient structures came up into the air and the light of day like the astonished dead rising from the deep. Had they been endowed with eyes to see there would have been much to wonder at, for the Lake

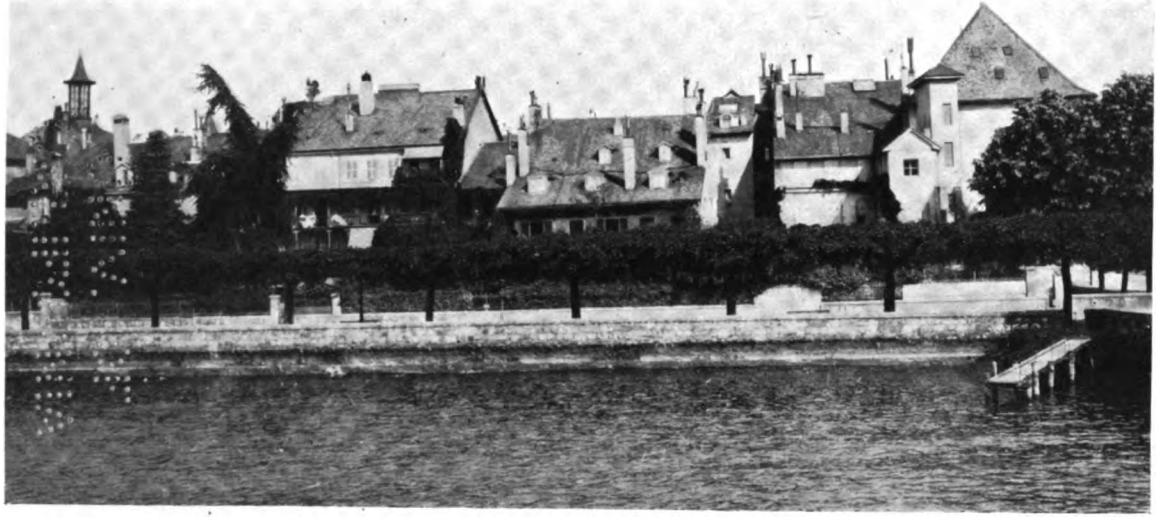
[1] "Dictionnaire Historique de Vaud."

steamers swept by them in the day and at night the electric lights of Morges flashed on the water that rippled round them. In the Geneva Museum, besides many relics of the lake-dwellers, is a boat dug out of the trunk of a tree that came from the village of Morges.

Morges is a delightful town, very placid and—as it would seem—very well content. Along the Lake front is a formal promenade lined with trees. It is bordered by walled gardens which belong to the houses of the town. The backs of these houses are more picturesque than the fronts, which face the street, for the backs of no two houses are alike nor are any two on the same level. They are alike in this, that they all have chestnut-coloured roofs. From the promenade can be obtained, on occasion, a view of Mont Blanc. The people of Morges appear to regard this view as a municipal property and one that gives the town a claim to be illustrious.

The town consists of two fine wide streets—the Grande Rue and the Rue du Lac—which run parallel with one another and with the margin of the Lake. They are very decorous streets, trim and clean, and made bright, here and there, by modest fountains around which flowers are planted and where pigeons delight to strut.

At one end of the town is a large modern church in the Classic style (built 1772-6) with a steeple that shines in the sun like polished bronze. At the other end is the château, used since the closing years of the 18th century as an arsenal. It is a vast, square building with a round tower at each corner capped by a "pepper-pot" roof. Many of the old windows are retained, while the main door is engaging, for it takes the form of a narrow entry



MORGES

that opens upon a steep and mysterious stair and is protected overhead by a little machicolated gallery.

The castle was built by Peter of Savoy towards the end of the 18th century, and is a splendid specimen of its period. It was originally surrounded, on at least two sides, by water, while the largest of the four round towers (that nearest the town) was the keep or place of last refuge. The Counts and Dukes of Savoy have resided here on occasion, but then they—like Queen Elizabeth—seem to have stayed, some time or another, at every building of any note in the country. In 1420 Amadeus VIII came with his wife and family to the Castle of Morges to escape the plague, and in order to render themselves more secure the duke had the town isolated. Morges has, of course, in common with all other fortified towns, been duly besieged, taken or burnt, and in these violent events the château has always played a leading part.

The castle, being very old, has, according to the custom of the Swiss, been smothered all over with plaster. In spite of this disfigurement it still retains much of its ancient dignity. One affront, however, brings it almost to the verge of the ridiculous. High up on the frowning feudal tower that formed the keep, where bowmen and harquebusiers kept watch, a huge clock-face has been plastered on the stone, just such a clock-face as would befit the front of a motor garage. By the château is the harbour. It was constructed in 1680, and as it was first laid down so is it now. It consists of two stone moles with, at the end of each, a rather pert little tower. Between the two towers, in ancient days, a chain was stretched to protect the haven.

The two towers are still in place and are still looking very alert, but the chain has gone and with it the pirates.

Morges was once the Portsmouth of the Lake and the seat of its navy, for in 1689, when Vaud was menaced by the Duke of Savoy, a fleet of men-of-war was built at Morges. It consisted of two "barks," each 70 feet long, with 24 rowers, 8 cannon, a battery of harquebuses and a hold to accommodate 400 soldiers. The number of the men has probably grown to 400 with the growth of years, and may possibly have started with the more reasonable complement of forty.

What the mediæval town looked like may be gathered from the Passage de la Voûte, which burrows, in quite the mediæval way, under some old houses; while the Rue Neuve—possibly the oldest street in the place—is a lane of long ago, for it is dark and clammy and so narrow that it would admit nothing with a greater beam than a laden pack-horse. The Rue des Fossés serves to indicate the line of the ancient walls. There are some old houses in Morges which show no little pretence, for there was a time when the town was a favourite resort for the wealthy people of Lausanne.

The Hôtel de Ville is a fine old building with a pentagonal tower in which is a winding stair and with a very handsome entry bearing the date 1680. On the face of the tower hangs the alarm bell. Projecting from an angle of the Town Hall, at the level of the first floor, is a very old stone figure of Justice. It takes the from of a loose, silly-looking young woman who is very immodestly clad and who holds negligently in her hand a pair of metal scales which wave in the wind. She is

not an imposing figure and would, indeed, appear to be better fitted for a reformatory than for a palace of justice.

One of the most interesting things in Morges is the old house, No. 54, Grande Rue, known as "La Laiterie." The interior has been admirably restored by the owner, a learned antiquary, and the rooms filled with his fine collection of old furniture. The house consists of two parts, that on the street dating from the 15th century and that at the back from a century later. Between the two is a courtyard in which are three beautiful stone galleries which rise one above the other. Each is supported upon pillars and rounded arches, and each has a stone balustrade. The structure bears the arms of the Blanchenay family and the date 1670.

The front of the house, looking on the street, has been modernized and spoiled beyond recovery, but the façade of the other house, that looks into the court, is little altered and its old windows are still charming. Three of the original wooden ceilings have been preserved. They are all notable, but one belonging to the 16th century is magnificent and is worth a journey to Morges to see. It is fashioned in the form of sunken squares enclosed by immense beams. The design is carried out with a boldness and an arrogance very expressive of mediæval ideas. There are many small rooms, which are panelled, have friendly-looking cupboards, and curious little paintings over the doors. They, with the rest of the house, enable one to realize the home of the gentleman of Morges as he and his family lived some hundreds of years ago. The furniture belongs to many periods and is derived from many

sources. Much of it is accredited to the 16th century and a great deal to the days of Louis XIV and Louis Quinze.

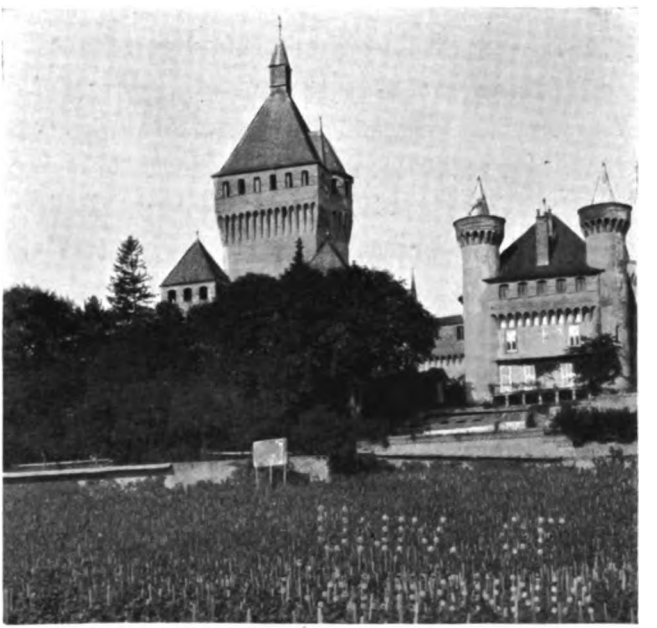
In its general aspect Morges is most attractive. It is throughout a grey town, so uniformly grey that it seems to be coated with dust or to be viewed through a mist. Beneath its pallor there is just a hint, here and there, of a colour that may have been bright long years ago, for in the almost universal grey there may be traces of a faint green on a shutter, of an almost vanished pink on a house front, or of a primrose that might once have been brown. Thus it is that its streets have about them the suggestion of a very faded brocade.

One old book speaks of Morges as "a cultured town," but it would now be described rather as "genteel" and as presenting a respectability so pronounced and prim as to be almost oppressive. It has the aspect of an early Victorian town, a Jane Austen town, that would pride itself on being "select," where the proprieties are observed and where deference should still be paid to "persons of quality."

There is one anomaly which is as difficult to appreciate as the garage clock on the feudal tower. Morges has a casino. How it found its way into the town is beyond understanding. It is an admirable casino, but it seems as out of place as a loud-voiced buccaneer at a vicarage drawing-room tea party.

Close to Morges is the amazing **Château of Vufflens.** It is the largest castle on the Lake, the loftiest, the most imposing. It is a building of that type and size which is generally spoken of as "a pile." It is a landmark in the country for miles around, and even when

THE CASTLE OF MORGES



VUFFLENS

viewed from across the water is impressive by its sheer immensity. Seen at a distance, when the sun shines on it, it is entirely white, as white as if it were made of marble and, curiously enough, it then appears to be new and a work of yesterday.

There was a castle at Vufflens as long ago as the 12th century, and the first seigneur of whom any record exists is the Chevalier Pierre de Vufflens, in the year 1160. Some vestiges of the early stronghold or of a château of the 13th or 14th century have been discovered. The castle was at first a freehold, but was subsequently placed for greater security under the protection of the bishops of Lausanne. The lords of Vufflens held it until the middle of the 13th century, when it passed by marriage to Richard de Duin. About the close of the following century it was possessed by the illustrious family of Colombier, who held it to the middle of the 16th century. The present castle was built by a Colombier in the 15th century, and it is assumed that the architect was an Italian. Vufflens was bought by François de Senarclens in 1641, and was in the holding of that great family until recent years. The last of the race, Henri de Senarclens, died in 1858. The Senarclens arms still surmount the main entry.

Vufflens stands on a small green hill in a land of many vineyards. At its foot the little village cringes like a frightened dog. What especially strikes the visitor, when wonder at the vast proportions of the place has lessened, is its aspect of extreme old age and the remarkable fact that it is built wholly of brick, of a small white brick. By an ingenious disposal of the brick beautiful and delicate ornamentation is introduced in the walls,

and where, in a few places, red brick is blended with the white, the effect is exquisite.

The predominant feature of the castle is a gigantic square tower, 190 feet high, capped by a cone-shaped roof. Beneath the eaves of the roof is a row of windows, black and hollow, which light the gallery where the sentries kept their watch. Then below the gallery, as the chief ornament of the tower, is a series of machicolations of an unusual and most picturesque type. At the foot of the great keep are four smaller towers, also square and designed upon like lines. At a little distance from the donjon is a low square castle or *manoir* with a round turret at each angle and with modernized windows on its lower floors. It is connected with the main building by a long gallery and a subterranean passage. In this lesser château the owner lives, or rather lived, for the castle is at present unoccupied and is, indeed, for sale. The castle appears to have been restored for the last time in 1860.

XLII

ST. PREX AND A MAN OF WEIGHT

A LITTLE way beyond Morges is **St. Prex.** St. Prex is said to have come by its name in rather a curious manner. St. Prothais, the Bishop of Avenches, who flourished in the early part of the 6th century, seeing his town in process of being destroyed by the Germans, sought peace in a solitude at the foot of the Jura Mountains. On his death his body was buried at a place called Bière,[1] but the Bishop of Lausanne, holding the saint in great veneration, resolved that his remains should be deposited in the cathedral of that city. The body was therefore dug up and carried by the clergy with great ceremony to the shores of the Lake.

The funeral procession was an imposing one, for there was a brave display of banners, while the company, as they marched along, chanted psalms and hymns. In due course they arrived at a little Lake town then called Basuges. On approaching this spot it was noticed that the bearers of the coffin began to stagger under their burden. The coffin had, in fact, suddenly become heavier. It became, indeed, more and more weighty with each step. The procession halted, additional bearers

[1] Some six miles due north of Rolle.

put their shoulders under the bier, the singing ceased; but the coffin became heavier and yet heavier, until at last it had to be lowered to the ground. When on the ground it was discovered that no body of men could lift it.

It was evident that the dead bishop had an aversion to be moved any farther and was determined to stay where he was. Thus it came to pass that at Basuges he was buried and the place came to be known as St. Prex, which, by some ingenuity, is considered to be an improved version of St. Prothais.

The obstinacy of the bishop did not diminish with the passage of years, for in 1400 he was again dug up and the attempt made to continue the interrupted journey to Lausanne. But the bishop was as determined as ever not to go to that city, for the coffin was found to have actually gained in weight in the intervening 800 years. So at St. Prex he remained, as he evidently wished.

Basuges, it should be mentioned, was almost destroyed by an inundation in 568, and on such part of it as remained high and dry the St. Prex of the present time was built.[1] The little town, standing as it does on a point of land, was fortified by Boniface, Bishop of Lausanne, in 1284, and became a very sturdy and independent place. It needed a stout tower and strong walls to protect it from the pirates of Thonon, to whom the periodic raiding of St. Prex appears to have been a popular diversion. It would seem that, besides its walls and its towers, it possessed—in the days of its glory—a court of justice, a cowhouse, a bakehouse and a chapel.

[1] "Le Léman," par Bailly de Lalonde. *Tome* i, p. 166. Paris, 1842.

ST. PREX

ST. PREX: THE TOWN GATE

It also possessed a mayor, for it is on record that the first mayor of St. Prex died in 1200.[1]

St. Prex occupies a well-wooded promontory which projects so far into the Lake that at a distance the place appears to be afloat. Above the trees can be seen the top of the old tower and the spire of the church. It is now a very small, subdued and inoffensive village, apparently half emptied of its people and given over to the lodging of cattle, for the smell of the cowshed pervades St. Prex from end to end. It boasts of a little parade, with a few trees and a bench or two. Of the old walls but a few traces remain, but the town gate and the ancient tower still stand. The tower is near the Lake edge, is square, lofty and pierced by fine Romanesque windows and by a few loopholes. Of the age of the tower nothing definite is known, except that it is "very old." It seems now to fill no public function, since it has attached itself in a very friendly way to a block of modern buildings. So close is the attachment that the old and the new seem to be standing arm in arm. Most of the houses of the town belong to the 16th and 17th centuries.

The town gate has a pointed arch, over which rises a picturesque clock tower with a gaily painted clock. The ancient house by the gate is now the *Maison de Ville*, as certain public documents pasted on the wall attest. The gate opens into a wide and cheery High Street where are the village shops. The rest of the town is occupied by bewildered lanes which are as tangled as a bundle of string.

[1] Guillaume Fatio, *op. cit.* The mayor in the middle ages was usually the agent or bailiff of the bishop and a minor magistrate.

The church is on a slight hill outside the town. It occupies the site of a church of the 12th century, some of the foundations of which have been brought to light. It is a large plain building with a handsome square tower, the round-arched windows of which are obviously very old. On the summit of the tower is a pointed spire covered with brilliant little tiles. The main door at the foot of the tower is in the Classic style and bears the date 1663. There are certain old windows in the body of the church, notably one of the early English type and another with an ogee arch. Both are bricked up. In the wall by these windows some pieces of carved stone have been inserted. One, representing leaves and an ear of corn, has on it the date 1503, while the other piece appears to be Roman, for the Romans had a settlement of some note on this point of land. The windows which light the church are Romanesque, and great age must attach to the heavy buttresses which support the walls. The choir is decorated by beautiful Romanesque arcades. The body of the church has been restored, for a woodcut of 1844 shows it as being little more than a barn.[1]

[1] "Le Tour du Léman," par A. de Bougy. Paris, 1846

XLIII

ROLLE

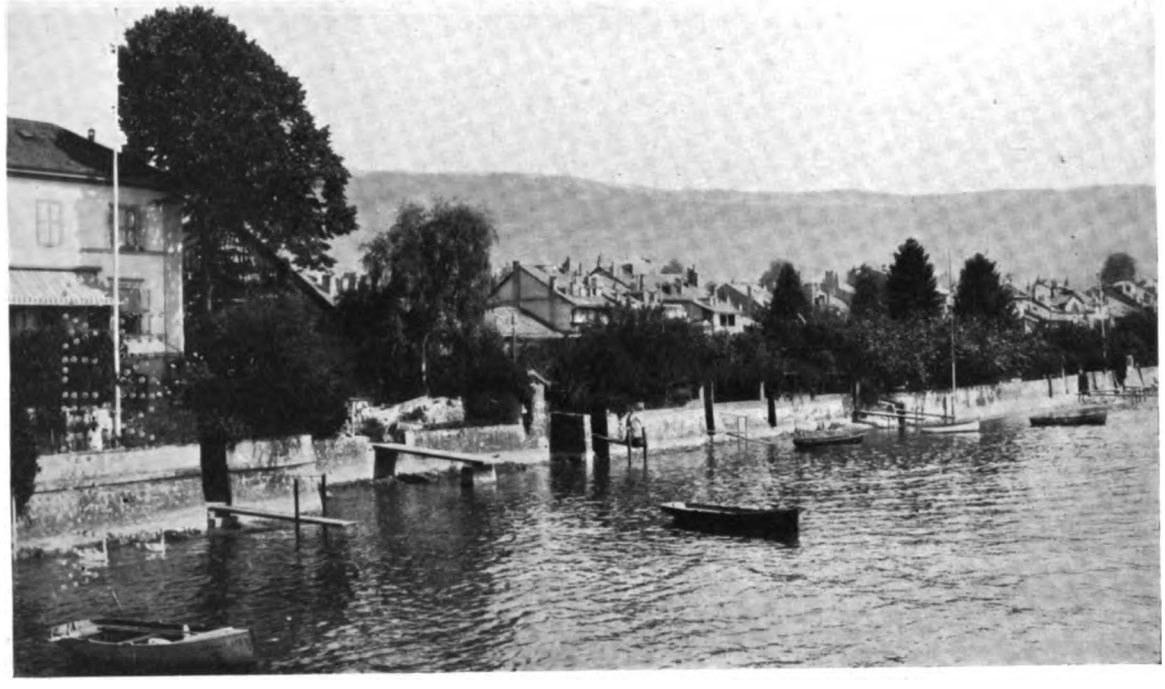
ROLLE is a curiously attractive town, being, as one writer sympathetically says, "*une honnête petite ville.*" It is very like Morges but Morges in miniature. It bears as close a family likeness to Morges as if that town were its parent. Morges has two wide, straight streets; Rolle has one. Morges has four thousand inhabitants; Rolle has two thousand. Morges has an ancient castle at one end of the town, and so has Rolle. Morges has a casino, and Rolle, not to be outdone, has an island of its own. This island, by the way, adds much charm to the place. It is an artificial island constructed in 1889. It is now covered with trees and is "adorned," as the guide books say, with an obelisk in honour of De la Harpe, who was a native of the town.

The long broad street of Rolle would pass for the Grande Rue of an 18th century town, if only its shops were a little toned down and a little less lavish in plate glass. In a fine house, No. 5, César de la Harpe was born. A tablet attached to the building describes him as the "*Fondateur de la Liberté Vaudoise,*" and gives his birth and death as 1754 and 1838. There is also in the Grande Rue a round-arched gateway with a little square tower over it furnished with machicolations and

with double ogee windows. It bears the *insigne* of the double cross and was evidently at one time the gate-house of some mansion of distinction.

At the end of the street is the castle, a low, long building with a fine square tower at either end and a water-tower standing in the Lake, but connected to the main building by a gallery. It is a fine specimen of feudal architecture and can claim a venerable past, for in 1291 the Count of Savoy had a castle at Rolle. The oldest part of the present building belongs to this period. The lords of Mont were from an early date the holders of the stronghold. Among them was Amédée de Viry, who in 1476 repaired the building and added a great round tower on the north-west side which still goes by his name. This is the Amédée who erected the little church at Coppet. At Mont, which stands about a mile and a half above Rolle, there can still be seen on an eminence some remains of the old feudal donjon of the barons of that place. The castle was much damaged by fire in 1580 and was finally modernized in the 19th century.

The body of the castle forms a triangle, consists of one floor only, and is now occupied by municipal offices, a school, and a museum which appears to be never open when a visit is projected. Over the main entry are carved, with great display, the arms of Hieronymus Steiger. In 1588 Jean Steiger bought the *seigneuries* of Mont and Rolle. He was followed by many members of his family, during whose tenancy the castle was restored, was much modified and given its present outlines. By the side of the entry is a pretty Gothic window which seems to have lost its way in this otherwise severe building. In the upper windows of the castle are curious iron grilles



ROLLE

of exceptional and extravagant fierceness. They look like the distorted branches of some horrible iron thorn bush, and appear to be enraged, but what purpose they serve beyond that of mere frightfulness it is hard to say. On the land side of the castle to the north-west is an immense round tower standing alone. It has a fine pointed roof. If it has a door it is hidden. Save for a few loopholes its walls are blank, and as to windows it has none. A more dumb, inhospitable and uncivil building could not be conceived. This is the Viry Tower already alluded to. It is at present used as a prison, and no building in the world could appear more like one.

From the Lake it is that Rolle looks its best, for its gardens come down to the water's edge just as they do at Coppet. There is no stiff promenade, but only a line of garden walls, and behind the gardens a row of unsteady old houses. Each garden has its summer-house and its little landing stage with usually a boat made fast to it, while the backs of the houses, which look towards the Lake, are so fantastically irregular and so beautiful with their red-brown roofs, their balconies and their climbing roses, that Rolle must ever be a place of pleasant memory.

About the second half of the 18th century Rolle was an exceedingly fashionable town which was much patronized by the "smart set" of the time. It was a spa. It had baths. It had a sulphur spring like that of Harrogate and also a stream that gave forth iron. The spring was situated at the end of the town on the way to Lausanne. All kinds of great people came to Rolle for the "cure," and among them no less a person than that wizened old cynic, Voltaire.

Behind Rolle there stretches a glorious green country

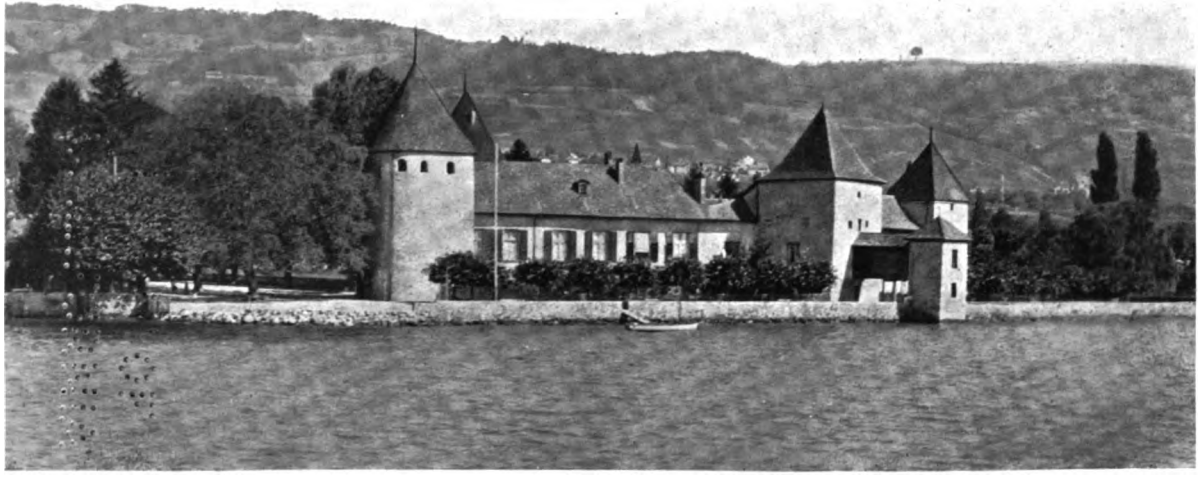
which ends at the foot of the tree-capped hill La Cote. It is dotted by many villages, each with its little church. They look inviting at a distance, but certain of them lose much of their charm when viewed from the actual street.

In **Allaman,** which stands not far from the Lake, is the vast Château des Menthon. It has been much restored and now follows the general lines of the great mansion of the 18th century. Its towers are no doubt older and its moat more ancient still. It is said that Voltaire wished at one time to purchase this castle, but their Excellencies of Berne declined the offer on the extraordinary ground that Voltaire was a Roman Catholic. There is a little old church in the village with a square tower and a pointed spire. In front of it and shading it is a fine and venerable tree. It is from just such a church that the curfew tolled "the knell of parting day" in Gray's "Elegy."

Higher up the slope, on a natural terrace, is the ancient and picturesque town of **Aubonne.** It is made a conspicuous object in the landscape by reason of its very tall white tower capped with red, which stands up above the town like a gaunt lighthouse. Aubonne was a Roman town of some consequence, and later a stronghold of the Burgundians and of the House of Savoy. In after days its history was one of violence and misfortune and of the pride that goeth before a fall, for it seems to have been fated that every family who held Aubonne must needs come in time to some kind of tragic end. The story of the town has been ably written by Duquesne,[1] but it is too long and too involved to be attempted in this place.

Among the great lords of Aubonne in the days of

[1] "Aubonne à travers les âges," par M. le pasteur Duquesne. Morges, 1908.



THE CASTLE OF ROLLE

ROLLE

Savoy was that Othon de Grandson who was suspected of compassing the death of Amadeus VII at Ripaille, as has been recounted in Chapter x. Before this mysterious event he had become famous as a soldier and had fought with distinction in the English army.

Aubonne was taken by the Bernese in 1536, and some hundred years later (viz. in 1620) the *seigneurie* of the town was sold to a certain Théodore Turquet de Mayerne. This man (born at Mayerne, near Geneva, in 1573) was a doctor who practised in Paris. He was a learned, ingenious and enlightened physician who was far in advance of his times. In his day no medicines were considered to be fit for the use of man unless they were derived from the animal or vegetable kingdom. Mayerne, who was skilled in chemistry, boldly defended the use of chemical remedies in disease. He was the first to employ calomel as a drug, and introduced the famous lotion known as "Black wash." For these heresies he was condemned as a quack by the College of Physicians of Paris; doctors were forbidden to meet him in consultation, puns were made on his name (*turquet*, a mongrel) and, although by far the most able physician of his time, he was practically banished from the city.

He was neither a quack nor a mongrel, but a physician of exceptional ability and a man who inspired respect by his uprightness, his independence and his frank honesty. In Paris he happened to have cured an English peer who took the discredited doctor with him to England and presented him to the king. His supreme merit was soon recognized. He was granted the M.D. of Oxford in 1606, was made physician to James I in 1611, and was later physician-in-ordinary to Charles I and his queen.

He greatly pleased the august lady by inventing some exceptional cosmetics for her use. He was knighted in 1624. He sold the *seigneurie* of Aubonne in 1650 and ended his days in retirement in Chelsea. Here he died in 1655 and was buried in the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. It is through these two notables that Aubonne becomes associated, in curious ways, with England and with London.

The château, raised aloft upon high walls, crowns the summit of the town. It dates from the 18th century, but the only relic of the ancient building is the plain white donjon tower by which Aubonne is known on the Lake. There was another tower like it at one time, but it vanished in 1887, partly from the effect of time and partly from the far more ruinous effect of "improvements." The present castle—used for municipal offices—belongs to the 17th and 18th centuries, has a beautiful gateway and a fine courtyard surrounded by an arcade of Classic pillars.

Among the quaint and picturesque ways of Aubonne will be found a fine market-house, raised upon columns, and an ancient church founded in 1806. The latter poor building has been so renovated and improved from time to time that it is now much deformed and is a mere hunchback and cripple of a church. So much of the old material has been preserved that it presents a pathetic medley of a dozen periods and a patchwork of all sorts of architectural curiosities. The next time it is restored it is to be hoped that it will be put out of its misery, and that the venerable pillars and oddly carved stones and corbels will be given a home in some kindly museum, for as a place of worship it is a mere travesty.

THE TOWER OF AUBONNE

AUBONNE: ENTRANCE TO THE CHÂTEAU

XLIV

NYON

NO town viewed from the Lake is more romantic looking than old Nyon. It appears as a medley of weather-worn houses piled up on a mound, on the summit of which is a fine mediæval castle, grey as a ghost. A study of ancient prints serves to show that Nyon has changed but little during the last few centuries. It has developed, it is true, a philandering promenade and some timid suburbs; but it is still the firm-knit, truculent old town on the hill that bawled defiance across the Lake.

It is a very ancient place, for it was founded by the Romans about 46 B.C. and was a town of some magnificence in its time, as is attested by the remains that have been discovered of noble buildings and an imposing temple. Its water was brought by means of an aqueduct from Divonne, which is nearly six miles distant, while in the bay of Promenthoux was a Roman military encampment and a harbour to serve it.

During the 2nd and 3rd centuries barbarian hordes swept over the town, leaving it blood-spattered, charred and dishonoured, so that when the Burgundians came in 443 Nyon was but a heap of desolate ruins. It is believed to have remained in this condition for some 600 years.[1]

[1] "Nyon à travers les Siècles," par Th. Wellauer. Geneva, 1901.

There it stood, century after century, a haunted mound shunned by man, a place of awe whose hidden ways were a refuge for wild beasts, a tumulus of bleached bones. Here, among the undergrowth on the hill-top were the broken pillars of a temple, the flagged pavement of a forum, the curved stone bench of a garden, the basin of a fountain, the walls that marked a street.

It was not until the end of the 11th century—in 1096 some records say—that life came again to this long silent hill and men began to make their homes among the pitiable ruins. The little hesitating town belonged at first to the Archbishop of Besançon and was assigned in 1130—for purposes of easier administration—to Humbert de Cossonay, lord of Prangins. About 1298 it passed into the possession of Savoy, grew straightway in stature and in strength, and became one of the principal towns in Vaud. In 1416 it could boast of 800 inhabitants. In January, 1536, it was taken without resistance by the Bernese, in whose masterful hands it remained until 1798, when Vaud declared its independence and when over the tower of Nyon was hoisted *La cocarde verte.*

The age of the castle of Nyon is uncertain. Although first heard of in 1289, it can only claim to have been built, on lines like the present, during the occupation of Savoy. After the Bernese took Nyon they reconstructed the castle in the years 1572-7, and it is this castle that crowns the hill to-day. Three of the round towers M. Wellauer believes belong to the 18th century and to Savoy, but the body of the building dates—as already stated—from the close of the 16th century.

The castle is singularly well preserved. It consists of

NYON

a massive square block of grey stone with, at each corner, a round tower capped by a conical roof. There is on one side of the château a fifth tower, square and of great size, which is furnished with machicolations. It contains the main stair and the belfry. The central building has a high-pitched roof of chestnut-brown tiles which is impressive by its great size. Unfortunately the windows have been modernized and provided with sun-blinds and flower-boxes such as would become a well-to-do boarding-house. The structure is now occupied by municipal offices and by a prison.

The entry to the castle yard is through a round-arched gateway over which are carved coats of arms and the date 1572. The chief arms are those of Zehender, the bailiff of the time. The details are almost obliterated, but it is still possible to decipher on the stone a figure that might pass for the bear of Berne. The shield is supported by two utterly ridiculous lions, standing erect and as crude as a couple of nursery toys. A drawing of the castle in the museum shows that as late as 1744 there was a ditch on the land side which was crossed by a drawbridge and protected by a picturesque guard-house.

The castle was the official residence of the *bailli*. Most notable among these representatives of Berne was the genial Victor de Bonstetten, the friend of Madame de Staël. A portrait of this charming old gentleman (who lived between the years 1745 and 1882) is to be found in the Castle Museum. One night during the Terror a servant summoned Bonstetten to come to a man who was hiding in the garden. The good-natured *bailli* went at once and found a wild-looking man in rags who

exclaimed, "I am Carnot. I die of hunger. Give me shelter for the night." Bonstetten covered his tatters with his own cloak, took him in, fed him and lodged him in his own bed. The next day Carnot was able to proceed on his way. He never forgot his kindly host, for when he became minister he invited Bonstetten to Paris and presented him to Napoleon, who was then First Consul. General Lazare Carnot—it will be remembered—was for two years president of the Directoire, but in 1797 was forced to flee from Paris. He returned to that city in 1799.

Nyon in the days of its glory was a walled town with three gates. The castle stood at an angle of the enceinte. The old wall on the Lake side of the town still exists, although it has been much reduced in height. At its foot runs the beautiful Promenade des Marronniers, shaded by trees and commanding a fine view of the Lake and of the range of Mont Blanc. In the course of the wall is the base of the large round bastion which figures in the old drawings of Nyon.

The Promenade ends at the only remaining gate of the town—the Porte Notre-Dame. It is a gateway with a rounded arch built out of stones from the Roman ruins. From this point the wall followed the Promenade du Jura as far as the Place Bel Air, where stood the Porte St. Martin. This gate has long since been demolished, but until quite recently there was on the roof of a forge near by (now pulled down) the watch-tower of the guard of this quarter of the town. From the St. Martin Gate the wall ran in a bold sweep round the Place Bel Air, where a considerable section of it (some 14 feet high) can still be seen on the side opposite to the new post

office. Where the Place Bel Air meets the Rue St. Jean was the third gate, the Porte St. Jean. From this point the wall (the base of which still exists) passed direct to the castle by the Rue des Moulins. These walls are believed to date from the 14th century.

At the foot of the castle mound and near to the margin of the Lake is a venerable tower called the Tour Jules-César. It is reached by a steep, old-fashioned alley —the Rue de la Poterne. The tower is square, is possessed of four stories and is capped by a cone-shaped roof. It is now occupied by poor tenements. The base of the tower, built of large blocks of stone, is Roman, the upper part (much modified) belongs to the Middle Ages. High up on that wall of the tower which faces the Lake is the figure of a man in stone, but so weather-worn is it that its identity is lost. It may be taken to represent the Unknown Warrior of Nyon's fighting days. When the fortifications of Nyon were built the tower became of comparatively little importance, for in 1898 it is on record that it was granted to a meritorious citizen, in recognition of his services, on the annual payment of a partridge, that bird apparently occupying at the time the legal position of the more modern pepper-corn.[1]

Not far from Cæsar's Tower is an old statue which represents another Unknown Warrior. It is the figure of a man in armour with a very gallant plume in his helmet and a halberd in his hand. As a work of art it is archaic. Below the pedestal on which the figure stands is a stone fountain bearing the date 1763, but it is evident that the statue is some centuries older. The warrior holds in his left hand a shield or scroll bearing the silver fish of

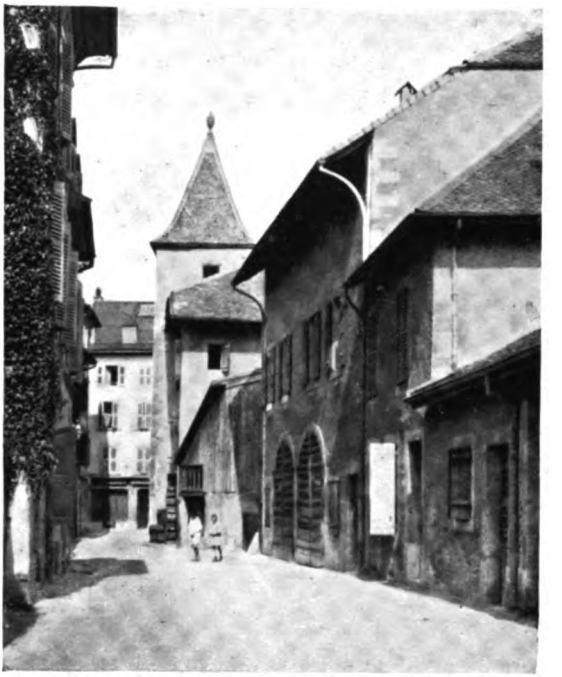
[1] "Dictionnaire Historique de Vaud."

Nyon and the date 1096—the year of the reputed resurrection of the town. Testuz[1] states that his armour and equipment belong to the period of Henri IV (1558-89). Nothing is known as to the identity of this cavalier. He is, however, much admired by the inhabitants and is affectionately known as "Maître Jacques."

The streets of Nyon—now a town of 5,000 inhabitants—are full of interest and contain many old houses, in the walls of some of which are fragments of curious carving. It also is made beautiful by many gardens and there is, indeed, one street, the Rue des Jardins, which has nothing but gardens on either side of it. The chief gardens in this street belong to a large and ancient mansion which stands by the south side of the château on the site of old convent buildings.

The street known as the Rue du Vieux-Marché is supposed to traverse the Roman forum, since so many Roman remains have been found in its vicinity. In the picturesque Rue du Marché certain buildings are raised upon arches so as to form a long arcade full of deep shadows. One of these buildings is the fine old Town Hall bearing the date 1686 and flanked by a square tower which would seem to be older still. Let into one of the buttresses of the Town Hall is a large slab of Roman carved stone. Opposite to the Town Hall is one of the many beautiful fountains of Nyon. At the end of the arcades is the Tour de la Fléchère. It is a square tower, much mutilated and much plastered over, but it retains its fine stone doorway over the lintel of which, in bold carving, are the arms of the families Des Champs-Aubonne and the date 1597. This was the mansion of

[1] "Nyon et ses Environs," par Aug. Testuz (*l'Europe illustrée*). No date.



NYON: RUE DE LA FLÉCHÈRE

NYON: THE WRITING ON THE WALL

a noble and it stands in what was once the aristocratic quarter of the town.

Behind and below the present post office is the old corn mill of the *baillis* of Berne. It is built on the mill course of the Asse, and its wheel still tumbles round and round. It bears on the beams which face the street the date 1621 and the initials M.I.B.—I.O.D.M.

The national church of Nyon was built on its present lines in 1474. It has been many times restored—to its disadvantage. The lower parts of the walls are constructed of stones from the Roman ruins. The spire fell down at the end of the 18th century and has not been replaced. The nave is Gothic. At the east end are two very fine Romanesque windows of a most unusual type. On the outer wall at this part are two venerable carved stones, one showing the sun and the letters I.H.S., and the other the arms of Savoy.

Near the church, in the Rue du Prieuré and in the wall of a modest house, is set an inscribed stone. The inscription it bears is shown in the photograph facing page 294. This remarkable Writing on the Wall may be translated as follows:

> "In 1578 a *cupa* of corn cost 15 florins
> and a *setier* of wine 18 florins."

It is impossible to give in modern terms the equivalent value of these measures, as both they and the florin were subject to local variations very difficult to gauge with any accuracy. The stone expresses the high water mark attained by the cost of living in 1578. This was the result of oppressive taxation, for, by the so-called Convention of Lausanne of 1564, it was stipulated that the

Bernese should pay to Savoy an indemnity of 80,000 gold crowns, and it was further resolved that this money should be a charge on the Pays de Vaud.[1] Moreover, the rebuilding of the castle of Nyon was commenced in 1572, and it may be assumed that the people of Nyon were called upon to contribute to this costly undertaking.

The interest in after years of this Writing on the Wall may be judged by imagining the significance of a stone let into the wall of a house on Ludgate Hill with the inscription:

"In 1920 a loaf of bread cost 1/4½
and a bottle of whisky 12/6."

[1] "Histoire du Canton de Vaud," par P. Maillefer. Lausanne, 1903, p. 254.

XLV

MADAME DE STAËL

THERE is no place on the Lake more fascinating than Coppet—little, old-fashioned Coppet—with its grey château and its memories of Madame de Staël. Places of historic or sentimental interest are apt to be marred by the callousness of change and the intrusion of unsympathetic detail, but here at the château nothing has altered. It is as it was a hundred years ago. There is no jarring element, nothing to disturb the memory of the past and the perfection of the picture it conjures up.

It is possible, without an effort, to reconstruct the romance of the faded house and the scenes that it witnessed—scenes that belong to a picturesque period in the history of France and to a very remarkable company of dramatis personæ. It is possible to realize the presence of its radiant châtelaine, to see the beautiful Madame Récamier, Benjamin Constant, "with his red hair, his pale blue eyes and his gawky German-student appearance"[1]; Madame de Krüdner, who "talked of nothing but heaven and hell"; Count de Sabran, who was so small that he was nearly buried in his helmet when he played Pyrrhus; Werner, the tragic poet "with his nose full of tobacco" and his bad French, and dear old Bonstetten, philosopher and gossip, who never outgrew his

[1] "Madame de Staël," by A. Stevens. London, 1881.

youth and never ceased his admiration of Frederika Brun. So whole-heartedly does the château with its rambling garden belong, even now, to the 18th century that folk in the attire of to-day—golf caps and tweed suits—seem grossly out of place in its precincts. Among its salons and its solemn walks should be ladies in turbans and plumes and in dresses with the waist just under the arms; while the men should wear wigs or long hair, full-skirted coats, with a soft cravat at the neck and frills at the wrist, breeches and bright stockings.

Very many books have been written on the subject of Madame de Staël and her times, but it may be convenient to some—standing, as it were, in the courtyard at Coppet—to give a brief résumé of her animated career. Anne Louise, Baronne de Staël Holstein, was born in Paris in 1766, and died in that city in 1817. Her father was Jacques Necker, a wealthy Parisian banker and Minister of Finance to Louis XVI.[1] A native of Geneva and a Protestant, he was a remarkable man with a still more remarkable appearance. His bust in the Museum at Geneva shows a head so strangely shaped as fully to justify his wife's assertion that "his features resemble those of no one else." The strange characteristics of his face are a pointed retreating forehead of immoderate height and a pointed chin of equally immoderate length. Madame's mother was Susanna Curchod,[2] the daughter of the Protestant pastor of Crassier, a village on the frontier of France and some five or six miles from

[1] Born 1732. Died at Coppet 1804. The blazing jade-green uniform that he wore at the meeting of the States General at the commencement of the French Revolution is in the Geneva Museum.

[2] Born 1739. Married 1764 Died at Coppet 1794.

Coppet. Having been left with little means at her father's death, she had to work for her living, and so became a governess. Before she met Necker she was beloved by Gibbon, the historian, as has been already told (page 255). She was amiable and well educated, prim and a little narrow in her views. In the presence of her brilliant husband and her daughter she became inconspicuous—the shadow of a gentle lady moving in a quiet background. A friend once said of her, "She is rigid and frigid but good and has no taste in dress." Petted and tenderly cared for, she remained the prim little governess to the end. She was devoted to her overpowering husband. In a letter she wrote—to be opened by him after her death—she says, "I believe my spirit will still watch over you, and that, in the bosom of God, I shall still enjoy your tenderness for me."

Anne Louise, educated by her mother with finicking care, developed with a rapidity that frightened that demure lady. At the age of twelve she wrote a drama which, as a literary work, was probably not equal to "The Young Visiters." At fifteen "she had mastered some of the profoundest works of French literature,"[1] and at the same age she wrote a précis of Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws." For a bouncing girl with an intense capacity for pleasure this may seem a dour employment, but her life was always made up of strong contrasts. From this period to the end of her days she wrote without ceasing, romances, poems, plays, philosophical treatises, criticisms, as well as a cyclopædic work on Germany. Her writings, collected after her death, filled eighteen volumes.

[1] Stevens, *op. cit.*

She being richly endowed, her father was in a position to select for her a husband. The husband must needs be moderately young, of good family and position, must agree not to separate the bride from her parents and, above all, be a Protestant. Such a man was not readily to be found in Catholic France; so finally Eric Baron de Staël Holstein was chosen as the most fitting. He was 37 years of age, a Swede, and the Swedish Ambassador in Paris. The marriage, which was not a love match but a *mariage de convenance* arranged by the father, took place in 1786. Three children were the result of this union, two boys and a girl.[1] After the birth of the third child Madame de Staël obtained a separation from her husband on the ostensible grounds of his recklessness in the matter of money. He died in 1802. When he was ill the kind-hearted lady went to see him and hoped to bring him to Coppet, but he died on the way at Poligny of an apoplectic stroke.

The attraction exercised by Madame de Staël was remarkable. Her salon, whether in Paris or at Coppet, in London or at Weimar, was crowded with men and women who were anxious to talk to her, to discuss with her or merely to see her and take her hand. It was the charm of the woman herself that brought the world to her feet and not wholly her reputation as a writer. It began when she was only twenty. It lasted to the end of her life. She gathered together more who were illustrious in literature, science and art than a learned society could pretend to embrace or a princely court could attempt to honour. There was scarcely a person of

[1] Augustus, born 1790, died at Coppet 1827. Albert, born 1793, killed in a duel 1813, and Albertine born 1797, married the Duc de Broglie 1816, died 1838.

eminence in Europe whom she had not met. She had chatted with Marie Antoinette at the Trianon. She had talked (but much less pleasantly) with Napoleon. She had argued with Chateaubriand. She had exchanged views with Goethe. It is notable that her attractiveness appealed to women as well as to men, and that a large number of her intimate friends were of her own sex.

She was in Paris during the outbreak of the French Revolution and witnessed the horrors of 1791—the downfall of the monarchy, the attack on the Tuileries, the massacre of prisoners, the setting up of the guillotine. She was entirely fearless and never, in the most trying moment, did her gallant heart fail her. In September, 1792, she had to flee from the terror-stricken city. She was alone, for her husband was in Holland, and she was expecting in a few months' time the birth of her second child.

She had sheltered, at the risk of her life, several people who were fleeing from the Tribunal. M. de Narbonne—once Minister of War—was hiding in her house when a horrified domestic hurried back to her mistress to say that a paper posted on a wall declared M. de Narbonne to be one of the proscribed. In a little while the ruffians of the Revolution entered the house to search for refugees. She met them with dignity, rebuked them for their intrusion and finally, "with death in her heart," treated them with pleasantries—chaffed them, in fact—and, leading them to the door, bowed them out smiling and submissive.

She disliked Napoleon and he disliked her and was, moreover, frightened of her. The two were, in certain characteristics, a little too much alike ever to be friends.

His vanity annoyed her. She was piqued by the fact that he utterly ignored her personal attractions. He considered her ugly. She admired his abilities, but hated his ideas of liberty and distrusted his ambitions. She considered him a usurper, for in politics she was a "constitutional republican." She had "a difficulty of breathing in his presence," but stood up to him with unflinching eyes and sturdy courage. "When about to meet him," she says, "I wrote down a number of tart and poignant replies to what he might have to say, had he chosen to insult me." He never insulted her, because he was afraid to do so. He once said "she carries a quiver full of arrows that would hit a man were he seated on a rainbow."[1]

Her influence in anti-Napoleonic circles became so great that in 1808 the jealous autocrat banished her from Paris and later from France. She was thus exiled from her beloved city for ten years. She travelled a great deal, visiting Italy, Berlin, Vienna, Russia and Sweden. She was twice in England, once, in 1793, when she stayed at the charming village of Mickleham in Surrey, and on the second occasion, in 1813, when she made her home at 80, Argyll Place, Regent Street, where she held a court worthy of a queen. Although she was so much at Coppet, she had little liking for a country life. It was Paris she adored. When a friend at Coppet was pointing out to her the glories of the mountains and the Lake her only answer was, "Show me the Rue du Bac."

In 1811 Madame de Staël married a young French cavalry officer named Rocca.[2] She was then forty-five

[1] Stevens, *op. cit.*

[2] By birth a Swiss, his family being Italian refugees in Geneva.

MADAME DE STAËL

From the painting by Mme. Vigée Le Brun in the Geneva Museum

(From a copyright photograph supplied by the Museum)

years old, while Rocca was twenty-three. The marriage was secret and was kept a secret until after her death. Although there was a difference of over twenty years in their ages, he was apparently as devoted to her as she to him. Rocca had been wounded in the war, was lame and in very delicate health. He was, however, a lovable if somewhat impetuous youth with "a most magnificent head." There was one child of the union, a boy. The child was left with a doctor in the remote village of Longirod, in the mountains, some five miles above Rolle. Here he was brought up under a false name and described as the son of American parents. This treatment of her youngest child is one of the least creditable features in Madame de Staël's career. Rocca only survived his wife some six months.

Many estimates of Madame de Staël have been given to the world. They are, for the most part, based upon her attainments as an author. Possibly after the lapse of a century critics would be unprepared to bestow upon her works the extravagant praise that they received during her lifetime. Possibly her "Corinne" would not now be regarded as "an immortal monument,"[1] nor would all allow that her "Allemagne" "inaugurated a new era in literature." Still, she was undoubtedly an accomplished writer, although her works are—in the opinion of many—superficial, flimsy and unnatural. Those who may not agree that "she was the most remarkable woman that Europe has produced"[2] will perhaps endorse—if with some reserve—the opinion of Macaulay, that "she was certainly the greatest woman

[1] Saint-Beuve.

[2] Galiffe quoted by Stevens, *op. cit.*

of her time." It was a woman who spoke of her as "a most celestial creature"[1]; it was a man[2] who said that "she was probably the most remarkable person in conversation that ever lived."

As a conversationalist she was brilliant, eloquent, quick in repartee, ready in wit, yet conciliatory and "fond and caressing to all." Benjamin Constant, who knew her better than most and who was, indeed, to her "more than friend," declared that her two most predominant qualities were affection and pity. She was sympathetic to a fault, was never bitter and knew nothing of envy, hatred or malice. She deplored her natural restlessness. She was never still. Her activity was unbounded and almost a disease, so that there is little exaggeration in those who said that her life was a rush and a whirlwind.

Vain she assuredly was and no doubt, as Constant says, "in too great a hurry to put herself forward." It was her passion, at any cost, to be always in the limelight. She was eager for affection. She wished people to like her, and it was only her inexorable good sense that kept these traits within reasonable bounds. It will be no matter of surprise that she knew little of "nerves," although many of her passages with Benjamin Constant were marked by theatrical or hysterical outbursts. It will be somewhat unexpected to learn that she was a sound woman of business and an excellent manager of a household. She had, indeed, a contempt for those who assume that the position of a woman of genius is incompatible with that of a good housekeeper.

Being warm-hearted, passionate, sensual and readily

[1] Mlle. Huber. [2] Ticknor.

swayed by sentiment, it was inevitable that her days could not pass without the interruption of a love affair or so. There were, indeed, a great many of such affairs. With this phase of her life Col. Haggard deals in an interesting volume wherein he shows Madame de Staël in a light which—even allowing for the easy morals of the time and for possible misrepresentation—is certainly deplorable.[1] Sincere as was her attachment to Benjamin Constant, fervid and ephemeral as might have been her love for Rocca, it remains clear that the deepest devotion of her life was for her father. One little episode will illustrate this. When in May, 1812 (eight years after her father's death), she commenced her flight from Coppet to escape the persecution of Napoleon, she thus records her last moments in the old house.

"Many times during this anxiety I invoked the memory of my father. I went to his study where his arm-chair, his table and his papers were still in their old places; I kissed each cherished trace of him. I took his cloak that, till then, I had ordered to be left on his chair, and bore it away with me, that I might wrap myself in it at any moment in which death might approach me."[2]

At Coppet Madame de Staël kept practically open house, entertaining everyone who had any claim to eminence in letters. Coppet became, indeed, a sort of court and the intellectual rendezvous of Europe. Its châtelaine left her company free all the morning, but in the evening they united and then began a conversazione which was probably without an equal of its kind. Every

[1] "Madame de Staël, her Trials and Triumphs," by Lt.-Col. Andrew Haggard. London, 1922. See also, "Madame de Staël and her Lovers," by Francis Gribble. London, 1907.

[2] Stevens, *op. cit.*

day a domestic placed on the table by the side of her mistress's plate a little green branch. This she carried with her as a kind of bâton when she entered the salon and with the flourish of it she punctuated her conversation. Those who gathered around her talked of literature and the arts, recited poems, read passages from the works they had each in hand, criticized every author of pretence, acted plays and often did not separate until the early hours of the morning.

The conversation was, no doubt, from a modern point of view stilted, artificial and extravagant. The great aim of all was to be brilliant and sparkling. It was appropriate to speak of a lady as a goddess and to treat her as such, to break forth into uncontrolled rapture or to exhibit "transports of delight." It is no matter of wonder that these evenings were sometimes tiring, when everyone was posturing on a tight-rope and trying to outdo one another in feats of wit. There were headaching evenings also, as must have been the case when a learned man who denied the personality of Moses insisted on giving an analysis—chapter by chapter—of the writings ascribed to that patriarch. It is no wonder that jovial old Bonstetten should write, "I returned yesterday from Coppet. I feel fatigued as by a surfeit of intellect. I am half dead," or that Byron, who envied the cleverness of a lady with whom he could not compete, should say—with some show of temper—"Her society is overwhelming—an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense, all snow and sophistry. She talks folios."

In appearance Madame de Staël was plain and (unlike most plain women) she was fully conscious of the fact. She would sacrifice her talents and her fame, she said,

to be as beautiful as Juliette Récamier, her friend and the most lovely woman of her time. Madame de Staël was a brunette, with black hair and large dark eyes, which all who met her declared to be magnetic and magnificent. Of her various portraits the one that is probably most true to her is that painted at Coppet by Madame le Brun in 1809, when the authoress was forty-three.[1] It is a little marred by its setting, for Madame de Staël is shown perched on a rock in an open, windy country, bare-headed and with a lyre in her hand. She is assuming the character of Corinne, the heroine of her famous romance. The face is that of a woman brimming over with health and vivacity, an intelligent rather than an intellectual face, a face certainly sensuous and animal, but keen, alert, clever and supremely amiable. "To aid the expression," Madame le Brun writes, "I entreated her to recite tragic verses while I painted," but the face is so full of good humour and, indeed, of roguishness that the effect of the tragic verses would appear to have been lost.

Her last illness was short and her last moments happily free from distress, for she died in her sleep.

[1] It is now in the Museum of Geneva.

XLVI

COPPET AND ITS CHÂTEAU

VERY charming is the small town of Coppet when viewed from the Lake. It is a homely, comfortable looking place which has changed so little that it is to-day much as it was a hundred years ago. It appears as a cluster of old, brown-roofed houses, on a slope, surrounded and shut in by a circle of trees. It has happily escaped "improvements," and even the tiny church has not been restored. There is no formal promenade by the Lake, no row of planes clipped to pattern and scarcely a modern dwelling to spoil the impression of an eighteenth century town.

The houses stand a little way back from the shore so that their gardens may come down to the Lake. Thus it is that the whole of the "front" at Coppet is made up of gardens which are a blaze of colour all the summer through. The garden walls are centuries old. They rise direct from the water, and over them may hang a tress of scarlet geranium, a tangle of clematis or, in the autumn, a pendent scarf of purple convolvulus. When the Lake is smooth—as it so often is—these flowers and the grey wall they cling to are reflected in the water as clearly as if on glass. Some of the taller plants, the hollyhocks and the delphiniums, seem to be looking over the wall at their reflections in the water.

Each garden has a humble water-gate, with steps

COPPET: THE CHÂTEAU

leading to the Lake. Here the housewife dips her watering-can, making on the polished surface a circle of ripples which change the reflections of the flowers into prismatic waves of yellow, red and blue. Here, too, the small boy sails his boat and here the lovers lean over the wall and talk. Close to the water's edge is the tiny church, with its beautiful east window of flamboyant Gothic and its aspect of great age. On the summit of the town and looking down upon the cluster of brown roofs is the pale, grey château. It seems to mother the place like a grey hen watching over a brood of brown-speckled chickens.

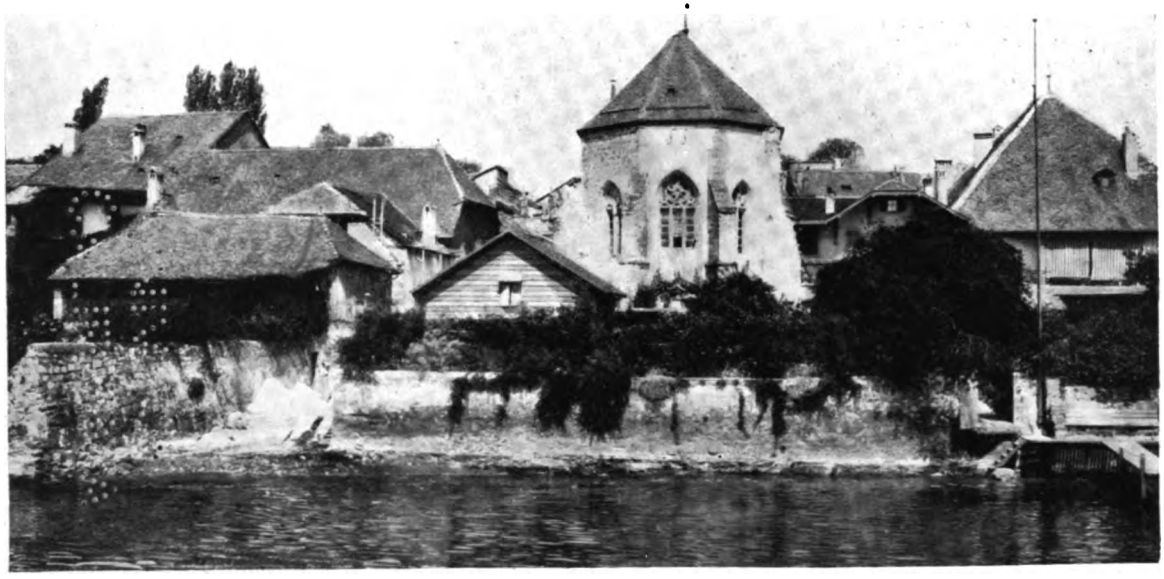
The town, which can number only 570 inhabitants, consists of one long street, a lane or two and a road of some quality which climbs up to the château. The houses are nondescript and irregular. Each has its own particular character, for there is no uniformity of style in Coppet. The dwellings form fine arcades, as in some Italian towns, along the sides of the street, while in the shadows of their heavy arches are curious, shy little shops. There are many dim alleys, too, a fountain, and a 16th century house with a vaulted entry in which is exposed an ancient column. A gallant coat of arms stands over the gateway, while a tower and balcony still look down into what was once a stately court-yard. The tower served to defend the approach from the Lake. The house belonged to the *fief* of Mézières and the arms are those of Quisard, lord of Crans,[1] combined with the arms of another family. The town had originally two walls which descended in fan fashion from the château to the Lake. In these walls were four gates.

[1] Crans is about midway between Nyon and Coppet.

The church, as already stated, is very small and very old. It is built of rough stone and is held up by ponderous buttresses, since it seems unsteady. At the end that looks on the street is a bell-tower with a steeple bright with ruddy tiles, and a Gothic door much out of shape and apparently never used. The glory of the little building, however, is the east window, which turns towards the Lake and which seems almost too ornate for so simple a place. The church was built about 1500 by Amédée de Viry and was originally attached to a Dominican convent.

Inside it is very bare and, indeed, much neglected. It presents only a nave with a vaulted roof and two empty side-chapels. The main feature of the blank interior is an arrogant, black stove of great height, which stands in the centre of the church and dwarfs everything around it. To make itself more obtrusive it parades a prodigious stove-pipe, which is carried boldly across the nave from side to side. Against the wall are two rows of monks' benches, the seats of which are uncouthly carved with heads and shells, fishes and frogs, monkeys and wine-bottles. Some bear the arms of the founder, Amédée de Viry. Curiously enough, on the upper part of certain stalls are cut, in high relief, the rose, the thistle and the shamrock. Another anomaly in this barn-like place is a very handsome white marble vase on a black pedestal. It was erected—the inscription states—by Madame Necker in memory of her parents. From this it appears that her mother was Magdelaine d'Albert and that she was born at Montelimart.

The château is on the summit of the town. It is a low building that forms three sides of a square and is



COPPET : THE CHURCH

a beautiful model of the French country house. The *seigneurie* of Coppet has been held by many illustrious nobles, among whom was that Othon de Grandson of Aubonne who was involved in the drama of Ripaille (Chapter x). The château was sold to Amédée de Viry, lord of Rolle, in 1484. It was he who built the church. He appears to have died in 1518. The barony of Coppet dates from 1484.

The date and origin of the original castle of Coppet are unknown. M. V. von Berchem[1] asserts that there is no authority for the statement that it was founded by Pierre of Savoy in 1257. That a castle did exist at Coppet in the 18th century would seem to be undoubted. In 1660 it appears as a *château fort*, with a square keep, three round towers, a moat and a drawbridge. Having become ruinous, it was pulled down (all but one tower) in 1665 and was converted into a *maison ouverte* or country mansion.

It was purchased in 1767 by Gaspard de Smeth, of Frankfort, a merchant of Leghorn. He reconstructed it in its present form. His arms and those of his wife, Ursule Kunkler, still surmount the central court. He died in 1771, and is buried in the church of Coppet. The château was purchased by Necker in 1784, who made certain alterations and carried out the existing internal decorations. It is now the property of Comte d'Haussonville (great grandson of Madame de Staël through her daughter, the Duchesse de Broglie), who very generously allows visitors to see the house on certain days of the week.

An arched way under the château leads to a court-

[1] "Dictionnaire Historique du Canton de Vaud."

yard, one side of which is open to the garden. The charm of the place is that it is practically unchanged since the days of its illustrious châtelaine. The rooms are almost as she left them. The furniture is the same, so that little is lacking to complete the conception of Coppet as it was in the days of its glory. Three rooms are shown on the ground floor, the *grande salle* (now the library), where the plays were acted and the recitations given. Among the old-world furniture is the piano upon which Madame de Staël used to play. The next room is that lady's bedroom. The bed is upholstered in red and white, and has a great canopy above it crowned by figures in gilt. Here are her turbans. They are mostly yellow or of the pattern known as that of the Paisley shawl. Here are her furniture, her writing table, her arm-chair and portraits of herself, her mother and her last child, Alphonse de Rocca (born 1812), a pretty but delicate-looking boy of about five or six with his mother's wonderful eyes.

The next room is the bed chamber of Madame Récamier. It is a little room with a simple bed in the corner, draped in faint green and with a canopy over it fixed to the panel. The walls are covered with a hand-painted Chinese paper, and the furniture is very dainty, as was befitting to the lady of the room. These two chambers must be regarded as museum rooms, for they could hardly be the actual apartments in which the ladies slept. The three rooms just named all look across the Lake.

A wide stone stair leads to the upper floor. It is a haunted stair crowded by the shades of the brilliant folk who once paced up and down its now silent steps. One

COPPET : THE MAIN STREET

can imagine Benjamin Constant among them, now bolting up radiant with delight and now crawling up with hangdog looks and that despondency which he so vividly describes in his Journal.

On the upper floor are two apartments which both open upon a balcony facing the Lake. The *salon* is a beautiful room, but much smaller than one would have expected. It is upholstered in red and write. Here Madame de Staël, waving her green branch, walked to and fro among her distinguished friends and amid a babel of chatter. All the furniture, including her own especial sofa, is the furniture of the time. The other room, the *petit salon* or music room, is small, contains many portraits (including one of Baron de Staël, the husband, and one of Madame Necker in an attire which justifies her reputation for being stiff), a piano and some of the properties—swords, pistols and daggers—used in the plays. The general colour effect is that of red and white.

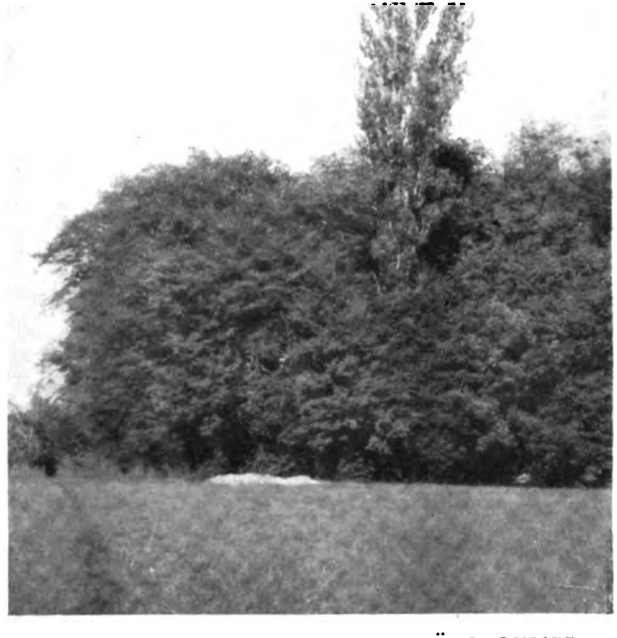
The garden is a wild garden of great fascination. Before the house spreads a meadow, in the centre of which is a fish-pond and at the end a wood. On either side are trees and meditative walks, with, in one of the thickets, a small stream which, after passing under a rustic bridge or two, tumbles out of sight. The garden has been well called "the love-making garden." It is so secluded, so full of kindly shade, so tempting a place to meet in, so sympathetic, so beautiful as a scene with which to associate the fondest of memories. Absent-minded paths wander among the trees. The shadows of the trunks make bars across them; the sun dapples them with gold. There are stone benches, too, by the way,

should the lady be tired, as well as hidden places where the most tearful parting would be both unseen and unheard.

Some distance from the house and the love-making garden is another wood, a dark, sombre wood, very unlike that by the château, for it is sacred to the dead. It lies apart on the other side of the road, with beyond it the open country. It is a solemn-looking mass of trees, its shade is very dense and it is surrounded on all sides by a lofty wall. In the centre of the thicket —we are told—is a low building whose entry is closed with stone. No one can see it, very few have ever seen it, for none are allowed to pass through the gate in the guardian wall.

In this little sepulchre lie the bodies of three—the master of Coppet, his wife and their only child. It is a strange burying place. Here in the depths of a dank thicket, whose gloom the sun can hardly pierce, and whose tangled ways are untrodden by the foot of man, lie Necker, the Minister of Finance to Louis XVI, Susanna Curchod, the beloved of Gibbon, and that brilliant, passionate and ever restless woman Madame de Staël—now three skeletons in a solitude.

COPPET: THE ENTRANCE TO THE CHÂTEAU



COPPET: WHERE MADAME DE STAËL IS BURIED

XLVII

THE HOME OF SUSANNA CURCHOD

CRASSIER, where Susanna Curchod was born and where she spent the early years of her life, is 5 or 6 miles from Coppet and 8¾ miles beyond Nyon. It is from the latter town that it is the more conveniently reached. Crassier lies on the border of France; indeed, the little stream that marks the frontier runs through its midst. The greater part of the village is on the Swiss side, and it is here that the church and the parsonage are placed. It will be remembered that Susanna Curchod's father was the pastor of Crassier and that the church was—with the rest of Vaud—Protestant. M. Curchod held the office of pastor between the years 1729 and 1760.

Crassier is small, for its population does not number 200. It lies in the midst of a green pastoral country at the foot of the Jura Mountains. It is as rural a spot as could be imagined, where the things that matter are butter and cows, the prospects of the hay and the laying of hens. It is a pretty village, trim and clean, with many comely old houses and delightful gardens. What is especially charming about it is the fact that it has remained unchanged and unspoiled. It is still the old-world village that the parson's daughter knew, and along whose single street she must have so often walked, dreaming of her future. The little lady was always very prim,

and it is noteworthy that a persisting feature of the village is its old-maidish primness.

So far as history goes the village is very old, for there were lords of Crassier as long ago as the 12th century. It has passed through many hands, while it is interesting to find that in 1884 Bonne of Bourbon, Countess of Savoy, and her son, Amadeus VII, granted "the house of Crassier" to their *maître d'hôtel*, one Etienne Guerric. This is the Lady Bonne whose story is told in Chapter x.

The church is of great age. Indeed, there has been a church on the present site since the 13th century. The building that now stands has been "restored" with unexampled violence. The old square tower, with its spire, has been preserved, while the body of the church has been modernized; that is to say, made to look as little like a church (and particularly an old church) as possible. In 1878 the stalls, the panelling and other ancient works in wood were torn out and used for fuel. The interior of the building is as bare as the destroyer could leave it, so that it falls short even of the dignity of the meeting-room at a workman's club. In further restorations of an equally hearty character carried out in 1911 traces of walls and vaults of a very ancient church were discovered.

Opposite the church is a beautiful old house with, in front of it, a tiny walled garden encompassing a solitary apple tree. It is a long, low house of two stories with a brown-red, weather-beaten roof and six windows on the upper floor. This is the parsonage, the house in which Susanna Curchod was born in the year 1739. It affords a satisfying picture of the village pastor's home. The

CRASSIER : THE CHURCH AND GENDARMERIE

garden wall is covered with ivy and the front of the house with jasmine, while the window-shutters throughout are painted with the canton colours—broad stripes of white and green. The house has undergone no notable change since the Curchod family left it.

The wife of the present pastor was so very kind as to allow us to see the sitting-room of the house. It is on the ground floor, and is a low-pitched room, the windows of which look into the tiny garden. But for the furniture this room is to-day precisely as it was in the time of the future Madame Necker. It brings vividly to mind the daring flight that the prim young woman took when she spread her wings at Crassier to sail out into the fashionable world. What contrast could be more extreme than that between this quiet jasmine-scented parlour and the Necker salon in Paris, brilliant with gilt and satin and the glare of a hundred lights, buzzing with courtly talk and made wonderful by the costumes of the beauties and the dandies of the day!

It is interesting to recall the fact that Edward Gibbon, in the course of his love-making, came to Crassier to see his beautiful Susanna. As has been recorded in Chapter XXXIX, the two met in Lausanne in June, 1757. In August of that year Gibbon came to Crassier and remained two days. He seems to have "looked in when passing" in October, while in November he stayed at the parsonage for nearly a week. The two must have sat in this identical parlour often enough —the awkward English youth with the big head and the prim and most decorous lady. They probably sat in the window, where, holding her hand, he would pour forth appropriate adoration in his recently acquired French.

Madame Necker, when she became a person of wealth and position, was very kind to her poor relations in Vaud. She was also a little frightened of them. Fear came upon her in this wise. A certain cousin "Toton," who very probably lived in a cottage at Crassier, wrote to the great lady and expressed a cousinly desire to pay her a visit in Paris. This produced a panic which found expression in a letter written by Madame Necker to a friend. In this rather too candid epistle the translated parson's daughter thus sets forth her views.

"Could I have the audacity," she asks, "to make her change her name or disavow my relationship to her? Even if I were willing to do so, would my husband and my servants keep my secret? On the other hand, how could I introduce her as my relation in a house frequented by persons of all ranks in society, and in which, to be appropriately dressed, she would have to spend at least a thousand French crowns a year? To say nothing of her manners, her way of speaking and a thousand other trifles which, without detracting from her real merit, would make the most unfortunate impression in a country in which people judge by appearances." [1]

Immediately behind the Curchod house is an inn called "The Inn of the White Goose." A sign-board painted just one hundred years ago hangs over the road from a corner of the building. On it, in fitting colours, is the figure of a white goose and the words, "*Logis à Pied et à Cheval.*" Above the goose is inscribed "*Mon Oie paye tout,*" which evidently embodies an ingenious play upon the word *monnaie.*[2] So there were wits, it seems, in Crassier in old days and in more houses than one.

[1] Gribble. *Op. cit.*, page 24.

[2] Spelt and pronounced *mennoie* in the 17th Century.

CRASSIER : THE HOME OF SUSANNA CURCHOD

XLVIII

THE TOWN THAT IS NOT A TOWN

THE country between Coppet and Versoix, traversed by the Geneva road, is very pretty, very homely and as radiant with the joy of living as any good-hearted, sunny land can be. Versoix is, however, a perplexity. There are two Versoix—Versoix la Ville and Versoix le Bourg. There is a further complication inasmuch as the latter was formerly distinguished as Versoix le Village.

Now a tram-line runs from Geneva to Versoix. It passes through le Bourg, and some way farther on stops at la Ville, where the line abruptly terminates. The traveller, coming from Geneva, will have to decide whether he will stop at Versoix le Bourg or will go on to la Ville, because the conductor is sure to ask him. If he resolves to go to Versoix la Ville he will find himself deposited, not in a town, but in the country. He will, in fact, be put down on a white high road with fields on one side and the thickly wooded grounds of a mansion on the other. He will see no street, no church, no café and, indeed, no house. It is as if a Londoner wishing to go to Richmond found himself deposited in the middle of Richmond Park. Whatever Versoix la Ville may be, it is quite evident that it is not a town nor even a suburb.

The stranded visitor probably takes the returning

tram and alights at Versoix le Bourg. He here finds himself in a town, an undoubted town, with a railway station, a pier, a grocer's shop and a police station. There is no possibility of mistaking it. It is a town. The other place is not.

It is a town that looks its best from the Lake, for the houses come down to the water's edge in leisurely fashion and lean over the wall like idle men. There is a modest promenade shaded by plane trees, and, in its general bearing, the place may be a fragment of old Chelsea in its unpretentious days. It is indeed a suburb of Geneva where town folk come on high days and holidays for boating and for a day in the country. It presents no more interest than such a suburb may be expected to afford. On one large house is a tablet which states that on its site in the 18th century stood the Château of Versoix. An old print[1] of the 16th century shows the little town as completely surrounded by a wall and as having in its centre the selfsame château in the form of a lofty round tower. This drawing depicts Versoix at an unhappy moment of its career. It shows it in process of being besieged and—worse than that—displays the enemy, like a swarm of ants, pouring into the town.

This, however, does not explain the bold-faced imposture of Versoix la Ville. The title is not a jest, but rather a term of derision. In 1766 Geneva and France were at loggerheads. The grounds of the dispute are immaterial. A "Plan of Mediation," proposed by France, was presented to Geneva in December, 1766,

[1] "Histoire populaire du Canton de Genève," par H. Denkinger-Rod. Geneva, 1905. Page 209.

VERSOIX

and was uncouthly rejected. France in revenge resolved to blockade the city, and at once closed the frontier which separated the canton from the greater state. This action—from the French point of view—was not quite a success. Geneva had an exit through Savoy and could still reach Lyons, the great mart with which she was so intimately concerned. France, on the other hand, where it bordered on Geneva, was seriously inconvenienced, since the supplies of the district were largely drawn from that city.

Voltaire, who was busy with his colony at Ferney, found himself in great straits and declared that his people were in risk of being starved. On February 10th, 1767, he wrote to the French Ambassador in Switzerland suggesting that, to punish Geneva, a port should be established at Versoix, and that to the new port the vast trade of Lyons should be diverted. The scheme, if successful, would go far to ruin Geneva.

The Duc de Choiseul at once gave the proposal his hearty support. In the summer of 1767 the plans for Versoix la Ville were completed and the construction of the new road that would lead to Lyons was commenced. The first thing demanded at Versoix was the port. It was to be called "Port Choiseul." By May, 1768, some 2,000 men were employed in the construction of this harbour which was to rival that of Geneva. The port was to be square in outline and was to present, on either side of the entrance, a low square tower. A detailed plan of Port Choiseul is given in M. Jean Ferrier's interesting work on Versoix.[1] The construc-

[1] "Le Duc de Choiseul, Voltaire et la Crèation de Versoix-la-Ville, 1766–1777." Geneva, 1922.

tion was so rapidly advanced that the moles were very nearly completed. The great drought of 1920-21 caused the Lake to sink to a degree almost unprecedented, with the result that the harbour works of 1768 came into full view. A photograph in M. Ferrier's book shows the once submerged harbour as it appeared in 1921. The moles—constructed of stonework supported by piles—are so complete that it was possible to walk from one end of the harbour wall to the other.

With the town little progress was made. It was plotted out on the ground behind the port, and, from the plan given by M. Ferrier, it would have been, if completed, a town of no little magnificence. It was hexagonal in outline and surrounded by a wall. It was to contain a custom-house and many warehouses, an hôtel de ville, a hospital, bridges and canals, an obelisk, fountains and fine boulevards. Through the centre of the town ran the present highway, passing in its progress across a spacious Rond Point. The streets were arranged on rectangular lines, as in a new American city, and were dignified by such names as the Rue Choiseul, the Place Royale, the Avenue Richelieu, etc. The actual building operations did not advance beyond a few huts for the workmen, a stone house for the officials and a canteen.

In 1770 the great Minister Choiseul fell from grace, and with his disappearance the phantom town vanished. The area is now occupied by a few Lake-side mansions with wide-extending grounds. A fine cedar marks the entry into the invisible city. There is no indication of a quay, since the gardens reach to the water's edge. The would-be streets are now lawns and thickets. A

wooded lane or two, running straight to the Lake, may possibly indicate the position of some ambitious Rue Centrale or Rue de la Paix. There is still, however, the Rond Point. It is marked out by a circle of stone posts which, no doubt, in the city of Choiseul, would have been connected by massive chains gracefully looped.

With a wish to be helpful to the tourist, I would suggest that if he wants to go to the Town of Versoix he should not go to Versoix the Town.

XLIX

VOLTAIRE AT FERNEY

BETWEEN Versoix and Geneva there is one place where the steamer stops. It is called Bellevue, and is worthy of its name, but is of no other interest, being merely a pretty villa-suburb of Geneva. Less than two miles inland from Bellevue, however, and invisible from the Lake, is the world-famed village of Ferney. Ferney lies in the plain which stretches from the foot of the Jura Mountains to the Lake. It is in France; just in France, for it is but a little way beyond the frontier. It is 8½ miles from Geneva, with which it is connected by a tramway and by a shady road through cornfields, vineyards and other pleasant places.

Voltaire, wearied by many wanderings and soured by the experience of many homes, settled down at Ferney in 1758 when he was 64 years of age. At Ferney he spent the remainder of his days, a period of no less than twenty years. The property was bought in the name of his niece and housekeeper, Madame Denis, who was also his heiress. Ferney at the time was a wretched hamlet occupied by forty or fifty equally wretched inhabitants who were "devoured by poverty, scurvy and tax gatherers."[1] The state of the peasantry in France at this period was indeed deplorable. They lived in hovels

[1] "Life of Voltaire," by S. G. Tallentyre. Vol. II, page 78.

scarcely fit for cattle; three-fourths of what they earned was seized as taxes; there was a heavy duty upon salt, and the chief means of sustenance was black bread. They were crushed by the tyranny of their masters, were forbidden to fence their lands lest my lord's hunting should be hindered, to manure their crops lest the flavour of my lord's game should be spoiled, and to weed their vineyards lest the partridges should be disturbed.

For the hungry folk of Ferney Voltaire changed to summer the winter of their discontent. Before ten years had passed he had built a fine village with homes for some hundreds of inhabitants, among whom there was not a poor person. He obtained a reduction of taxes, re-acquired rights of which the villagers had been robbed, set up a school, provided a doctor and secured work for everyone on his domain. He well merited the title of the "Patriarch of Ferney" and the blessings of all who came within the range of his benevolence.

The château at Ferney was old and ruinous, picturesque no doubt, but impossible as a place to live in. It was entered through two towers connected by a drawbridge according to the plan of a *maison forte* of mediæval times. Voltaire pulled it down and built in its place the château which now stands. He was his own architect and, being ignorant of that art, wisely followed the lines of the country mansion of his day. The result is a plain, comfortable house which, as Tallentyre says, has "no architectural merit except that its ugliness is simple." The house contained fourteen bedrooms, and such was the hospitality of the patriarch that they were never for long unoccupied.

Inconveniently near the house was a tumble-down old

church, which, in spite of the violent protests of the priest, was got rid of in 1761. Voltaire, in the same year, built a church to take its place, but erected it at a point farther removed from the château. On it he caused to be inscribed the words, "Deo erexit Voltaire." He explained this inscription by saying that the church was the only one in the world erected to God alone and not to a saint.

He laid out a garden by the château on the lines of gardens that in the course of his wanderings had pleased him, planted innumerable trees, put all the land under vigorous cultivation and erected immense farm buildings which, to this day, fill the passer-by with admiration. The change accomplished in Ferney by this remarkable man was little less than miraculous, for in the place of a rotting hamlet and a ruined castle buried in a desert of brambles and weeds he produced a trim, bustling, well-to-do little town, together with as prosperous a farm as was to be found in the countryside.

Under the roof of the new château of Ferney was gathered one of the strangest households in the annals of domestic life. In the first place the master of the house presented an unusual and arresting figure, comic to some degree, yet to some degree alarming. A quaint, emaciated man whose skin was drawn over his cheek bones like parchment, who had a high, narrow forehead, bare as a skull, a determined mouth that was a mere slit, as if the toothless jaws had snapped together like a trap, while in this death's head were two large, restless eyes as bright and as keen as those of a hawk. It was with some reason that he was called "the famous old skeleton" and "the old owl of Ferney."

His garb, too, was very odd. At the time when he bought Ferney he is described as appearing "in a long pelisse, a black velvet cap, and a peruke which covered almost all his face except the nose and chin, which by now nearly met."[1] He would be seen working in his garden in old grey shoes and stockings, a long vest to his knees, the same black velvet cap and the huge drooping peruke which hung from his head like a spaniel's ears. He was the sort of object in the street that set children screaming and that dogs barked at. He knew he was peculiar, and would ask, when people came to see him, "Have they come to see the rhinoceros?" When he went abroad he affected an antique type of carriage which was painted a bright blue, was speckled with gold stars and was drawn by four horses.

Another person in this strange *ménage* was Madame Denis, Voltaire's niece and housekeeper. She was a widow and, at the time of the purchase of Ferney, was 48 years of age. She was tiresome, extravagant, idle and utterly incompetent. She was under the impression that she possessed literary gifts and personal attractions. Instead of managing the house, she devoted her time to writing preposterous plays or to inditing amorous letters to imagined admirers. She was short and fat and well described as "Madame Roundabout." Among her minor accomplishments, she squinted. The brilliant, epigrammatic Madame d'Épinay speaks of her as "entirely comic, ugly but good-natured, and a liar simply from habit." Besides muddling everything she did, she bullied her uncle, who found that the house could only be cleaned and put in order when she was

[1] Tallentyre. *Op. cit.* Vol. II, page 69.

away. After Voltaire's death she married again, at the ripe age of 69, and it is reported—to show the discrimination of justice—that her husband bullied her as she had bullied her uncle.

How the house was managed under this feckless playwright is a mystery, for it was more like an hotel than a private dwelling. There were no fewer than sixty or seventy persons about the place, including the five servants who waited at table. Visitors called almost every day. If they were strangers, Voltaire would send down a message that he was dying, and if they came again would excuse himself on the ground that he was still dying. Those who came to sup stayed the night, for there was no inn in Ferney. Those who came on a visit of a few days were apt to stay for weeks or even for months. One relative—who was paralysed—remained at Ferney ten years, until, in fact, he died. At two different periods there was an adopted daughter living in the château in addition to this ever-changing company.

The second of these casual daughters was a very pretty young woman who ran about the house and in and out of the garden, singing and laughing the day through. She was clever and gentle and possessed of as sweet a disposition as woman ever had. Voltaire adored her, while her affection for him was the solace of his declining days. She came to Ferney in 1776. Voltaire called her Belle-et-Bonne, but her real name was Mademoiselle Reine Philibert de Varicourt. She belonged to a noble family, was penniless and destined for a convent. Voltaire came across her as a total stranger. He picked her up as he would have picked

OLD SHOPS IN FERNEY

VOLTAIRE'S HOUSE, FERNEY

up a stray kitten, took her to Ferney and devoted himself to making her happy. She was married to the Marquis de Villette in 1777 in the Ferney chapel; but she never deserted the old patriarch who had brought joy into her life. She was with him when he died, and after his death devoted herself to the glorification of his memory.

Belle-et-Bonne at Ferney is a picture to linger over, the picture of a pretty, light-hearted girl taking charge of a cynical, violent old man who was always fighting with someone and who was to so many an object of terror or of hate. She arranged his papers, soothed him when he was irritable, joked at his bitter and sardonic thrusts and treated him, in a motherly way, as a great petulant baby. A stranger picture still would be presented by the *salon* at Ferney on a summer's morning, when Voltaire, in his long-skirted coat and dangling peruke, would be seen—at the age of 88—teaching the laughter-shaken Belle-et-Bonne how to dance.

The household at Ferney cannot be completed without mention of the fat Swiss servant Barbara. She was the comedian of the group, the comic servant out of a French farce, the licensed jester in an otherwise solemn establishment. Voltaire was delighted with her, appreciated her humour and called her his Bonne-Baba. She, on the other hand, told her master, in her comic way, some home truths, and especially ridiculed the idea that he had any common sense. Once when he had made himself ill by an indiscretion in diet she laughed in his rueful face and said, "With all your cleverness you are sillier than your own turkeys."

Voltaire's industry and versatility were amazing. He

was probably the most voluminous writer who ever lived. Although he did not rise until 11, he did a great deal of his work in bed, for he slept but little. In his room were five desks devoted to the separate subjects with which he was at the moment engaged. One would be given up to a drama, another to a poem, a third to a skittish letter to a lady or a kindly note to someone in distress, while the fourth would display the material for a biting criticism which would wound an opponent like the thrust of a rapier.

Although born and brought up in a city, Voltaire taught himself farming, made his land pay, and became a typical squire and prosperous country gentleman. One can imagine him taking a sample of his own wheat out of a deep pocket and pouring the grain from one skinny hand to the other as he haggled with the miller over the price, or prodding a sheep sarcastically with his stick as he disputed its value with the dealer. He kept bees—had, indeed, four to five hundred hives—cultivated silkworms, bred horses and had a barn for fifty cows.

When the serious civic troubles in Geneva drove a body of artisans out of the town, he offered a sanctuary to some fifty malcontent watchmakers, advanced them money, found them material and provided them with houses. The colony flourished, so that in 1773 Voltaire, poet, critic and dramatist, sold no fewer than 4,000 watches at a profit, thanks to his energy and his persistent touting for orders. Having a store of raw silk, he started silk weaving, and—like Madame de Warens—began with the making of silk stockings. He sent the first pair to the Duchesse de Choiseul with a pretty compliment as to the size of her foot. This enterprise

also flourished, while the colony added to its industries, in course of time, the making of lace and of linen.

After Voltaire's death in 1778—at the age of 84—Madame Roundabout inherited Ferney. She promptly sold it. It was occupied for some time by Belle-et-Bonne and her husband, and when, finally, the property was disposed of, all relics of Voltaire were scattered to the winds, including even the Chinese wall-paper of his especial room.

Ferney at the present day is a pretty little village, very quiet, but rather without purpose, for every trace of Voltaire's busy colony has disappeared. It consists of one long street, through which the tramway runs, and of one or two side-streets. The main street has been modernized, but not unpleasantly; while in one of the by-streets can be seen a part of Ferney as Voltaire left it. The houses here are simple and of two stories, are all alike, are all grey and uniformly faded-looking. The ground floor of each is occupied by a large round arch beneath which was the shop or the workroom. All now are closed and the small lane is very quiet. It calls to mind some of the humbler by-ways of Versailles, and is so unlike the ordinary village street as to give to Ferney a quite distinctive character.

Under a large plane tree in the village are a fountain and a bust of Voltaire, while in the main road stands a very pleasing statue of the Patriarch of Ferney in outdoor dress. It is so lifelike that if the figure could step down from its pedestal one would see in the street the curious old gentleman, thin and bent but very eager in his glance, taking a walk through the village he had made.

The château is a little outside Ferney and on higher ground. It is a simple, homely-looking house of two main stories, built in a faintly classical style, roofed with slate, and presenting throughout a uniform tint of grey, for even the sun-shutters are grey. It is, indeed, nothing more than the house of a well-to-do gentleman farmer who had chosen to live among his cornfields and his vineyards. In front of the house is a tall iron railing, and just within the railing is the church, with its prominent inscription, "Deo erexit Voltaire." It is a little stone building with round-arched windows and door. Its charming simplicity is spoiled by a vulgar clock tower, which is evidently an addition of more modern and less considerate days. It appears to be used merely as a storeroom.

The grounds around the château are small and simple, are well wooded and are enclosed within a high wall. There is no pretence to a park, for the house is simply a house on a farm. The country around, but for a vineyard or two, is singularly English, and, indeed, if the vines were replaced by hop-fields it would be a part of Kent. The view from the château is singularly beautiful, for to the north are the Jura Mountains and the brilliant plain stretched out at their feet; while on the south are the Lake, the hills of Savoy and the dazzling range of Mont Blanc.

Walking one silent afternoon beneath the wall which guards the grounds of Ferney, I heard a burst of girlish laughter ring out from the terrace of the house. It may have come from the lips of some merry serving-maid, but I prefer to think that it was an echo of the long dead laughter of the radiant Belle-et-Bonne.

INDEX

Index

Index

C

Index

D

Index

Index

Index

H

Index

Index

M

Index

N

Index

S

Index

T

PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY
CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED,
LONDON, E.C.4.
F.25.322